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THE MAINTENANCE OF ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN CANADIAN SOCIETY:
RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE, PSYCHOSOCIAL INFLUENCES, AND
INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETENESS OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN
THE CANADIAN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

by

Ahmad F. Yousif

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa in compliance
with the requirements of the program
leading to a PH.D. in Religious Studies



Ahmad F. Yousif, Ottawa, Canada, 1992



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Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the author's family, particularly his father, Fadhel Yousif (1907-), without whom this thesis would never have been begun and finished.

PREFACE

Objectivity is not easily achieved when the subject of study is one's own people. The possibility of bias may deprive the scholar of the advantages gained from his / her closeness to the topic. As a Muslim, the writer has had a great deal of personal contact with members of the Muslim community in Ottawa. The field research was aided by cultural and linguistic (in case of Arab-Muslims) competence, which minimized the possibility of distorted communication.

In an effort, to control the tendency for bias, a scientific frame of reference was used explicitly. The frame of reference for this study is **Islamic identity**: the degree to which Muslims in Canada have or have not adopted Canadian values and the extent to which changes occur in their religious identity. The Muslim community in the Canadian National Capital Region (C.N.C.R.) has been selected as a case study.

Upon arriving in Canada, in 1981, the writer felt that religion did not play an important role in Canadian society. In 1982, while pursuing his M.A.

at the University of Ottawa, he attended Friday-noon-prayers on campus and for the first time, he visited the Ottawa Mosque. That visit, along with his academic background in Islamic Studies inspired the writer to investigate the degree of Islamic identity among the members of the Muslim community in Ottawa. The following work is the fruit of that inspiration and hopefully will contribute to our present knowledge, particularly in the field of ethnic community relations in Canada, as well as Muslim minorities in non-Islamic states.

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INTRODUCTION

History of Islam

Before examining the contents of this study, it may be proper to give some explanation about Islam and Muslim in general. What does Islam mean? And who is a Muslim?

Islam, as a technical term to denote the system of beliefs and rituals based on the Kur'an, is derived from the recurrent use of the verb **aslama** ("submit," sc. oneself) in the Kur'an to denote the characteristic attitude of the true believer in relation to God.¹

The term Muslim, in French "Musulman," has always been used to characterize the adherents of Islam. To be a Muslim and to belong to Islam involved practical devotions, rewards and punishments, moral, legal transactions, Islamic jurisprudence and theology, as well as the spiritual aspect of the religion. Islamic law, for example, proceeds in its determinations upon two sources: the text of the **Qur'an** and the **Sunnah** or the traditions of prophet Muhammad.

Muslims consider the Qur'an the basis of their law, and therefore, when applied

1

H. Gibb, and J. Kramers. Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1961, p. 176.

to juridical matters, is known as **Al-Shari'ah** or the law. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (570-632 A.D.) throughout his life by the archangel Gabriel.

Presently, Islam is the fastest growing religious system in the world. It has spread rapidly from a strong and ancient presence in the Middle East, North Africa, and Indonesia, throughout the world.

Islam is the second religion of France, with 2.5 million foreign residents Muslims in a population of 56 million - a total that excludes the large number of Muslims already French citizens. There are about a million Muslims in Britain's population of about 54 million, and more than 1.5 million resident Turks in West Germany's population of 61 million.²

In North America, it is estimated that there are more than four million adherent Muslims.

According to Islamic tradition, three elements are believed to have been borrowed from God by humans: intelligence, will and speech. **Intelligence** rests upon the fact that there is only one Absolute Reality, Allah (God), and related to Allah, all else in the world is relative (not itself absolute). **Will** refers to the ability of humans to choose freely between what is true and what is false, between the Absolute and the relative. **Speech** pertains to the importance of prayer through which the Muslim remembers God's goodness. Among Muslims worldwide, a visit to Mecca is expected at least once during a Muslim's lifetime. Mecca, the omphalos (navel), is considered the holiest place in the world, where the house of Allah was built by Adam.

Islam does not refer to a religion, so much as it refers to a way of life and of being in the world. The word **Islam**, in fact, refers to a posture of surrender, to a way of

2

William Pfaff. "Muslims seek to square religion, modernism." in The Ottawa Citizen. A-8, World Affairs, col. 2, October 23, 1989.

surrendering to Allah more wholly than to a dogmatic system of religious practices. The term "*in-sha-allah*," or "God-willing," tends to reflect the Muslim's relaxed way of looking at events and circumstances in the context of the meaning of the word Islam ie. the airplane will land on time, "*in-sha-allah*," the sun will shine bright tomorrow, "*in-sha-allah*," we will meet again, "*in-sha-allah*." An observer may be both mystified and enchanted by this attitude within the Islamic world.

Muslim Community in North America

Almost one-third of the total population of Muslims in the world today lives as a "minority" in lands where people of other faiths, creeds and ideologies have administrative, political and legislative control. As a religious minority, these Muslims face certain difficulties and challenges in practising their own distinct way of life.³

Like other major world religions, Islam has no geographical boundaries. Regardless of race, colour, nationality, language, and/or culture, Islam has spread to America.

Of the hundreds of thousands of slaves brought from West Africa by the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British between 1530 and 1850 to work in mines or on plantations in the American colonies, about 14 to 20 percent were Muslims⁴

3

Islamic Council of Europe. "Introduction." in Muslim Communities in non-Muslim States. London: Islamic Council of Europe, 1980.

4

Mircea Eliade (Editor in chief). "Islam in Americas." The Encyclopedia of Religion. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1987, p. 426.

Today, in almost every Canadian city one encounters Muslims, Islamic centres, associations, educational institutions, and/or mosques. In Ottawa, for example, Muslim women dressed in Islamic garb have become extremely visible, particularly during the past two years.

The Muslim community in Canada has its foundations in the West, where the first mosque in North America, Al-Rashid, was established in Edmonton, Alberta in 1938. Although many Muslims are among the recent immigrants, they are not the youngest religious group in Canada. In fact, research has shown that Islam has a long history in the new world.

Ever since Columbus landed in America, there have been African Muslims in the Caribbean area. That the vast number of these Africans were not immigrants or explorers, who came to America of their own choice, they were either kidnapped from Africa, or had worked in Portugal or Spain as slaves, or they were African Muslims who were enslaved by the Spanish after the fall of Grenada.⁵

Sociologist Abu-Laban has researched the Muslim demography in Canada. He states that: "The earliest record of Muslim presence in Canada dates back to 1871, when the Canadian census recorded 13 Muslim residents."⁶ During the last decade the number of Muslims in Canada has increased immensely; this is due in large part, to political as well as economical unrest in many Muslim countries. According to Abu-Laban:

5

Clyde-Ahmad Winters. "Islam in Early North and South America." Al-Ittihad. (Journal of the Muslim Student's Association of the United States and Canada) No. 3-4, 14, (1977): 63.

6

Earle Waugh, Baha Abu-Laban and Regula Qureshi, eds. The Muslim Community in North America. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1983, p. 76.

Yvonne Haddad has different information: "The census for 1881 and 1891 lists their [i.e., Muslims'] number as zero." see Y. Haddad, "Muslims in Canada: A Preliminary Study." in Religion and Ethnicity Coward and Kawamura, eds. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978, pp.71-100, esp. p.95.

Today it is estimated there are about 200,000 Muslims in Canada, the large majority of whom are immigrants or descendants of immigrants who arrived within the past twenty-five years.⁷

These immigrants come from different parts of the Arab world (Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria) and from Iran, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Turkey, Africa (especially Somalia), Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, South and Central America.

According to information collected by Statistics Canada, the census of June 3rd, 1981, "there were 98,165 Muslims, accounting for less than half of one per cent of all Canadians."⁸ The Muslim community in Canada does not live in a specific residential area but, "the majority, 53.1% of Canadian Muslims were, at the time of the census, located in Ontario."⁹ These Muslims represent different ethnic backgrounds, races, nationalities, languages, and "sects."

If we look back to early Islamic period, one can find that Muhammad himself, the founder of the religion, ordered some followers to leave Mecca, where they were being persecuted and seek protection under a Christian king in Abyssinia. The king indeed provided his Muslim guests with the security and freedom needed to practice their faith. In Islamic history, this movement is known as "the immigration to Abyssinia."

As indicated in the Islamic law (the Shari'ah), Islam is a way of life and it is an all

7

Baha Abu-Laban. "Foreword." in Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic: Socio-Cultural and Economic Links with Their Countries of Origin. Zohra Husaini. Edmonton, Alberta: Muslim Research Foundation, 1990, p. iii.

8

A. Rashid. The Muslim Canadian: A Profile Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada, 1985. p. 15-19.

9

Ibid.

encompassing religion. It inextricably binds both the social and the spiritual. In a state, where Muslims constitute the majority of the population, the integration between religious and communal life is enforced through the political structure of the nation; therefore, a pervasively religious lifestyle is the norm. According to Abu-l-ala Mawdudi, a Muslim scholar:

It is clear from a careful consideration of the Qur'an and the Sunna that the state in Islam is based on an ideology and its objective is to establish that ideology. The state is an instrument of reform and must act likewise. It is a dictate of this very nature of the Islamic State that such a state should be run only by those who believe in the ideology on which it is based and in the Divine Law which it is assigned to administer.¹⁰

Many Muslims who immigrated to Canada from Muslim countries found themselves deprived of the rigid social structure which had encouraged the practice of Islam, thereby maintaining their Islamic identity. Instead, they found a culture where religion constitutes only a fraction of people's lives. As a result, many Muslim immigrants found the transition difficult.

Perhaps one wonders how a small minority group, facing enormous psychosocial problems, could maintain its identity among a majority Christian group which comprises 95 per cent of the population. In an address given by Muhammad Abdul-Rauf, Director of the Islamic Centre in Washington D.C., to the first Islamic Conference in North America, he said:

Despite all these serious problems, Islam is spreading like a mighty torrent, sweeping through the doors of colleges and universities and even

10

Abu-l-ala Mawdudi. "Political Theory of Islam." in Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives. John Donohue and John Esposito, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 256-7.

penetrating the thick walls of prisons.¹¹

The preservation of religious belief is central to the maintenance of identity. Since the five pillars of Islam are an essential part in a Muslim's belief, the observation of these pillars may indicate the level of Islamic identity, at least in a quantitative manner. Sociologist Hans Mol states that, "religion defines man and his place in the universe."¹² This seems to imply that defiance of religious practice or belief means the stepping outside of one's boundary or place and thus identity.

Within the Canadian context, freedom (in a general sense) is sometimes considered too permissive to practising Muslims. The Qur'an and the Sunnah set certain boundaries for religious observance that do not always correlate with the so-called absolute freedom of choice in Canada. One should not assume, however, that Canadian society does not uphold values which might pressure the Muslim person away from the religious boundaries which are crucial to his/her identity. For example, according to the Shari'ah, drinking alcohol, eating pork, receiving bank interest, gambling, and sexual promiscuity are not acceptable and are forbidden to Muslims. Although the Islamic law clearly states that Muslims must abstain from the above mentioned norms, many Muslims in Canada as well as in all the so-called "Islamic states" permit themselves to enjoy them. Within the research sample of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region some

¹¹

Muhammad Abdel-Rauf. "Address." Proceedings of the first Islamic Conference of North America. Newark, New Jersey, April 1977.

¹²

Hans Mol. Identity and the Sacred: A Sketch for A New Socio-Scientific Theory of Religion. Agincourt, Ontario: The Book Society of Canada Limited, 1976, p. x.

respondents reported tolerance in practising even all the above forbidden behaviours. This may threaten a Muslim's religious identity.

The Muslim Community in the C.N.C.R.

The first Muslim family who immigrated to Canada and settled in Ottawa in 1903, came from a village in Lebanon called Kfarmishky. Since that time, the city of Ottawa and its neighbouring communities have witnessed a significant growth in their Muslim population. In 1979, the number of Muslims residing in Ottawa was estimated to be about 5000.¹³ Now, as estimated by the Ottawa Muslim Association, there are between twelve to fifteen thousand Muslims residing in the National Capital Region. During the last year and a half, the influx of Somalian refugees has greatly increased these numbers. According to a Somalian source, their community is comprised of over three thousand Muslims.

The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., as an instituted organization, was established in the basement of an United church in 1973 (see Appendix #A for community socio-demographic characteristics). The individuals who built the foundation of this community came from different cultural, economical, and ethnic backgrounds, however, one main element joined them together, their common faith. Professor John

¹³

This figure was given by Dr. Hussain Choudary, president of the Ottawa Muslim Association in 1979, through unstructured interview, October 14, 1991.

Renard states that:

Immigrants to whom I have spoken have indicated frankly that they came to improve their economic lot, but they still desire to live as Muslims in a non-Islamic society.¹⁴

Immigration Factors

Several factors have influenced the immigration of Muslims to Canada, particularly during the last two decades. My research on the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. indicates that there are five primary factors which brought Muslims to Canada: economic advantages, educational opportunities, political alienation from their ancestral lands, the pull of kin and friends already in this country, and the freedom of faith and expression within the Canadian law. Other reasons for immigrating are presented in Figure #1 (ie. Canadian immigration laws are flexible). Regardless of their initial motivation, one thing is common to all: "The Muslims who have come here, have come to make a better life for themselves, their children and their wives."¹⁵

¹⁴

John Renard. "Understanding the world of Islam." America. 11 (1979): 208.

¹⁵

Excerpt from interview with Ms. Eva Wahab, June 15, 1991. Ms Wahab is the first and oldest Canadian-born member of the Ottawa Muslim community. She was involved in the early stages of planning and fund-raising for the construction of the Ottawa mosque.

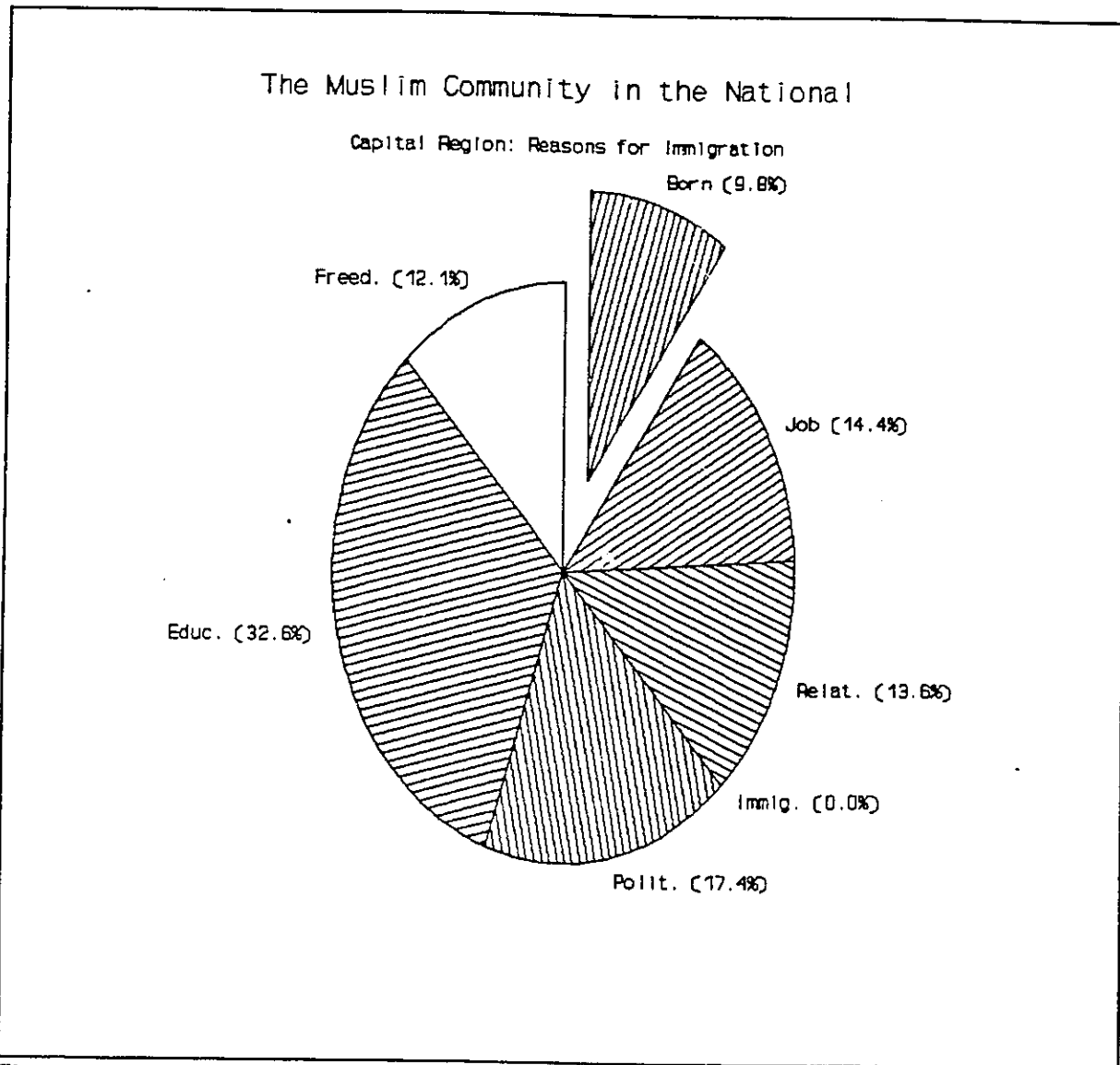


Figure 1

Ethnic Community Relations

Studies of ethnic groups or ethnicity is a relatively new phenomenon in the history of modern scholarship. Sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and psychologists have been conducting substantial research in order to explore the foundation and the

orientation of ethnic groups (visible minorities, ethnic communities, minority groups, religious minorities, including cults) and their social values, which may be seen as their ethnic identity. During the 20th century, interest in the history of ethnicity was manifested in the writings of distinguished scholars such as Fredrik Barth, Milton Gordon, Raymond Breton, Baha Abu-Laban, Wsevolod Isajiw, Jefferey Reitz, Edward Herberg, Hans Mol, and others.¹⁶ Their methodology incorporates an analysis of ethnic groups in order to explore ethnic cohesion and boundaries, maintenance of identity, residential concentration, language retention, and religious observance. Established organizations, which might be a dimension of ethnic solidarity as well as an instrument to prevent members of a minority group from rapid assimilation, have been well investigated by the above scholars, in particular Breton¹⁷. These scholars have in fact provided a wide variety of systematic approaches to analyzing the pattern of ethnic relations in Canada.

The term "ethnicity" or the "ethnic group" are among the most frequently used.

Terms denoting a particular ascriptive characteristic of a certain aggregate or collectivity of persons, have been, and continue to be, applied in various ways, depending on whether the writer's purpose was taxonomy (as in listing the various "ethnic group" in Canada" or analyzing the dynamic

16

See: Fredrik Barth, ed. Ethnic Group and Boundaries. Oslo, Norway: Universitets Forlaget, 1969; Milton Gordon. Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964; Raymond Breton. "The Ethnic Community as a Resource in Relation to Group Problems: Perceptions and Attitudes." Research paper No.2 Toronto, Ontario: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, (1981): 1-66; Wsevolod Isajiw. "Definitions of Ethnicity." Research paper No.6. Toronto, Ontario: Multicultural History Society of Toronto, (1979): 1-81; Jefferey Reitz. The Survival of Ethnic Groups. Toronto, Ontario: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1980; Edward Herberg. Ethnic Groups in Canada: Adaptations and Transitions. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada, 1989.

17

Raymond Breton. "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." The American Journal of Sociology. 70 (1964): 193-205.

quality, structure or process of those defined ethnically.¹⁸

Religious identity has been the cornerstone of ethnic groups in their adaptation to the new culture. Mol argues that religion provides three types of identity: personal, group, and social. Emphasis on any one type of identity can be related to an appropriate type of religion.

In the late 1950s, Breton contributed to the field of ethnicity by examining various ethnic groups in Montreal from their own formal organizational perspectives. In 1964, he conducted the most important explorations in the history of ethnicity, on both the national as well as international level. Breton's concept "**Institutional Completeness**" has been used by many scholars who have conducted studies on ethnic groups, particularly ethnic institutions. Institutional completeness deals with the influence of ethnic organizational development on both immigrants, as well as Canadian born generations. The individual's formal affiliations to the ethnic community are also important elements to consider. Some of these formal affiliations include the individual's interactions with different social and religious organizations in which the ethnic and cultural interests of the individual are represented and maintained. Breton states that:

In this study attention was focused not on the individual characteristics, but on the ability of the ethnic community in the receiving society to attract the immigrant into its social boundaries. It is found that this ability is largely depend on the degree of institutional completeness of the ethnic

18

Edward Herberg. Ethnic Groups in Canada: Adaptations and Transitions. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada, 1989, p.3.

community, but other characteristics of the community are also important.¹⁹

In November 1990, Breton published his monograph The Governance of Ethnic Communities: Political Structures and Processes in Canada.²⁰ He examines seven selected ethnic communities in Canada with reference to other ethnic communities and "native people." In this study, Breton viewed the ethnic communities as "stateless entities," that is having no state institutions, yet having public ones. Breton also explored members' participation in their ethnic community affairs and the group's collective identity, as manifested in community organization, leadership, decision-making, and collective goals. During the same period, Breton and other scholars published Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City.²¹ This volume was based on research conducted on eight ethnic groups in Toronto's metropolitan area. The authors investigated the persistence of individual ethnic cultures and the degree of equality achieved when participating in the social factors of the donor society.

Breton's methodology of institutional completeness will be utilized in this study as it relates to the Muslim community in the Canadian National Capital Region. Chapter three of this dissertation will be an in depth analysis of the concept of institutional

19

Raymond Breton. "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." The American Journal of Sociology. 70 (1964), p.193.

20

Raymond Breton. The Governance of Ethnic Communities: Political Structures and Processes in Canada. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, November 1990.

21

Raymond Breton, W. Isajiw, W. Kalbach, and J. Reitz. Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City. Toronto, Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1990.

completeness and will examine its relevance to the maintenance of Islamic identity in a non-Islamic society, such as Canada.

Canadian Social Values

Canadian structural ideology allows ethnic communities to maintain their heritage and, even more specifically, their identity as it is embedded in their religion.

The Canadian constitution makes no distinction on the basis of race, ethnic origin, colour or creed. Religious and other fundamental rights are fully guaranteed.²²

Canadian society also possesses some values which are similar to Islamic values. These include: education, general productiveness, democracy, sexual equality²³, fairness and peace. For example, education is highly regarded in this society and many Muslims have immigrated to Canada for this purpose (see Figure #1). "One might say that the spirit of Islam resides in Canada...Islamic philosophy encourages people to learn and have productive lives in the name of Allah."²⁴ In other words, a Muslim who

²²

Daood Hamdani. "Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic." Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. Vol. 5, No. 1, (United Kingdom) (1979): 7.

²³

Sexual equality in Canada is a political/social issue, while Muslims understand this element in term of religious belief as represented by the Qur'an. The topic of Muslim woman in Canadian society is an important one and this thesis cannot answer all the questions entailed by the subject; it is worthy of a study in itself.

²⁴

Excerpt from interview with Dr. M. Said Mounib who was the former president of the Ottawa Muslim Association in 1988, November 18, 1988.

educates him/herself seems to follow both a Canadian value and a Muslim value with one action, even though that person might extend the purpose of the action to Allah.

Freedom in general, within Canadian society, is another social value that Muslim immigrants appreciate. However, most community members find the social freedom too great in non-Islamic societies and somewhat alienating, especially, since it often influences the process of assimilation. When asked their opinion on freedom in Canada, many respondents were quick to respond "Too much freedom!" Regardless of where one is situated, in an Islamic or non-Islamic society, one's identity will always be challenged. One may observe that a Muslim who sees what lies outside of his/her boundaries might not be tempted to stray, but on the contrary, develop a stronger sense of identity. The following story was related about such crisis of identity.

Muhammad, who immigrated to Canada from his native land a few years ago, and I met for coffee. While we were having our coffee, Muhammad asked for beer. A blond, blue-eyed man, who happens to be a friend of Muhammad's entered the restaurant. As soon as this man saw Muhammad he stopped by to say hello. As he approached our table, he looked at Muhammad and said: "Hi Mike." Later on, when I asked Muhammad about his real name, he replied, "My real name is Muhammad, but my Canadian friends call me Mike!" During another meeting, Muhammad was going through a very serious problem with his non-Muslim wife. At this meeting, Muhammad suddenly started to express himself in Islamic terminology. This time, at the same restaurant, Muhammad asked for coffee to drink. He started to speak about his Islamic childhood, when he used to attend the regular prayers in his former country, the commitment to Islam by his father and his brother.

For Muslims who live as a minority and wish to maintain the ideal Islamic identity, the task becomes a delicate balancing act.

Discrimination and racism are factors that face Muslims in Canada. In order to adapt to the new culture and values of the society, they cannot stand out in any particular

manner. Even though the Canadian Bill of Rights prohibits discrimination on any level, it still exists. Personal discrimination knows no boundary in any land, but when it comes in an institutional form, conflict of identity arises. Since Canada is basically a Christian nation, its policies and structures were developed within this framework. Daood Hamdani, a Governmental Economist and author of three important articles on the Muslim community in Canada, believes this to be the main reason for institutional discrimination. According to Dr. Hamdani, "Canadian society was organized for a Christian community which leaves it unequipped to deal with Islamic tradition."²⁵

Christians attend Sunday religious services and believe this to be the day of the Lord and of rest. The five daily prayers or Friday-noon-prayer in Islam have no part in this tradition. The Muslim faces a conflict if he/she cannot leave work or school to attend the prayer. They can choose not to attend and risk losing ties with their religious community, or do the prayer during break time at work. Some Muslims are challenging the Canadian government in order to make attendance legal and respectable in Canadian society. In 1991, the Canadian Society of Muslims, which is based in Toronto, initiated a national campaign which challenged the government to accept "the Muslim Family Law." In its special issue, the Society states:

As Muslims and Canadians, we care about justice, equality, fairness, rights, freedom, order, opportunity, good government, peace, and harmony. As Canadians and Muslims, we care about the importance of having the sort of framework which is going to provide a spectrum of degrees of freedom, as well as constraints, which will permit all the people of Canada to pursue

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Excerpt from interview with Daood Hamdani, November 22, 1988.

their individual dreams, goals and interests...²⁶

In general, Canadian society has much to offer Muslim immigrants and can help them to maintain their Islamic identity through the religious freedom it provides in its Charter of Rights.

Ritual is another key factor which helps Muslims in Canada to preserve their Islamic identity. Ritual, which by definition, means re-enactment or sameness is essential for human stability and comes in many forms. "Holy, or religious, rites reinforce the cosmic perspective that cradles our identities."²⁷

Islam can be considered a ritual oriented religion. For example, the five daily prayers have a specific sacred pattern that has to be followed. From washing the body parts, to recitation, right down to prostration, the prayer has an order. This order eventually becomes internalized in the individual. "Just as change usually affects personal identity negatively, so does the re-enactment of sameness affect it positively."²⁸ Therefore, ritual for the Muslim can be the "strengthening link with the past and with the future of one's culture."²⁹ Fasting during the month of Ramadan, in a similar fashion, can be a "linking" experience which connects a Muslim to his/her personal Islamic

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Quoted from "Newsletter" published by the Canadian Society of Muslims (Muslim Family Law Campaign Issue), vol. 2, no. 1, September 1991, p. 2, Toronto, Ontario.

²⁷

Hans Mol. Meaning and Place. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1983. p. 55.

²⁸

Mol. Identity and the Sacred. p. 235.

²⁹

Ibid. p. 234.

identity; even though around him/her is a secular, pluralistic Canadian society.

The extent that each individual feels the link with his / her own religious identity, varies from person to person. For a so-called committed Muslim, ritual religious practice is the most significant activity of his/her Islamic identity. Prayer and/or recitation of the Qur'an, for some Muslims, are the primary rituals that bring them closer to God. These are not just routines, but represent wholeness and completeness for that particular Muslim. Community rituals and gatherings are another mechanism for maintaining Islamic identity.

During community prayer, a Muslim relates to others and others to him/her because they are all re-enacting the same ritual. The religious rite here differentiates itself from other customs in other religions and other foci of identity. Thus, all of the participants are sharing something that is uniquely theirs.

When a Muslim, as an individual, practices a certain religious rite, the ritual strengthens the person in his/her personal identity. Also, when individuals come together and practice certain religious rites, the ritual strengthens the group and its social identity. Mol connects the personal and communal experience of ritual in this way:

(Ritual) maximizes order by strengthening the place of him/her in the group, or society, and vice versa by strengthening the bonds of a society vis-a-vis the individual...Ritual, thereby, represents society.³⁰

Thus, rituals performed by Muslims in Canada represent their community and its identity as a distinct group in Canada.

Commitment to religious belief might be the strongest factor influencing Muslims'

30

Ibid. p. 233-234.

preservation of their identity. "Commitment is an anchoring of the emotions in a salient system of meaning, social, group or personal whether abstract or concrete."³¹

Muslims in general possess strong emotional attachments to their religion and thereby attempt to stay true to it in body, mind, and spirit. This is not to say that all Muslims in Canada abide perfectly by the rules of their belief. Instead, it implies that if commitment is strong, consistency with beliefs occurs and leaves identity strong. If commitment is not strong, then the belief is not central to the individual and alienation from identity is probable.

Commitment happens on two levels, personal and group or social. On the personal level, the good, attached, committed Muslim enforces the rules of belief in all aspects of his/her life. This personal commitment motivates and keeps an individual's behaviour somewhat predictable. "The predictability in turn imposes security and stability."³² "Commitment reinforces identity and systems of meaning, and definitions of reality."³³ For instance, if one never drinks because he/she is committed to belief and follows its rules, then the not drinking becomes predictable and a source of stability. In other words, if one's action is sacrilegious and a person is religious, chances are that a person will attempt to never do it. Therefore, Muslims in Canadian society who are strongly committed to Islam in an individual way, will maintain personal identity.

³¹

Ibid. p. 216.

³²

Ibid. p. 216.

³³

Ibid. p. 218.

On the second level; "Commitment to a social or group identity strongly contributes to the formation of consensus and this makes a society, or group more viable."³⁴

Social commitment acts as a support system for individual commitment. If an individual has common beliefs with a large viable group, then that individual is more apt to express that belief and stay with the large group.

Establishment of religious institutions has been first priority of Muslims in Canada. The mosques now found in almost every major city are not only the symbols of the fervency of their faith but also important socializing agents and transmitters of cultural values.³⁵

Thus, commitment to social groups aid the Muslims to validate their personal belief and customs on a much larger scale; the social commitment also reinforces identity on the personal level as well as the social level. Muslims who do not feel threatened by outside cultures, due to their own Islamic commitment, have a strong sense of identity as a result.

For Muslims living in Canada, pluralistic commitment can conflict with basic identity. Therefore, the Muslim community acts as a central base where values and norms come together. Through commitment to a social community of Islam one find the fundamental roots reinforced.

³⁴

Ibid. p.218.

³⁵

Hamdani. "Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic." p. 14.

Previous Work in the Field

This research explores relatively virgin territory, since few previous works have been done (see bibliography). Those studies which have been undertaken have focused only on the Middle Eastern communities in North America, specifically the Arabs, the majority of which were non-Muslims. These works show a negative correlation between Islamic observance and the mechanism of acculturation or assimilation into non-Islamic societies. They also discuss the process of acculturation³⁶ and assimilation³⁷ of Muslim communities in North America, while attempting to preserve their original values. None of these studies have approached the evaluation of individual Islamic identity within specific Muslim communities and their maintenance in non-Islamic societies.

Although it would have been interesting to compare the problems of the maintenance of Islamic identity in Canada, with the problems in the United States, the lack of American based studies of the issue makes this research impossible at the present time. Since previous authors did not focus on the maintenance of Islamic identity within non-Islamic societies, my study builds on their work and will be a pioneer in the field.

³⁶

Atif Wasfi. An Islamic Lebanese Community in U.S.A: A Study in Cultural Anthropology. Beirut, Lebanon: Beirut Arab University, 1971.

³⁷

Abdo A. Elkholy. "Religion and Assimilation in Two Muslim Communities in America." Ph.D. Diss. Princeton University, 1960.

Methodology and Techniques

This is a sociological study of the religious identification and adaptation of the Muslim community in the Canadian National Capital Region. It will shed light on the variation in the degree and pattern of adaptation and acculturation, as well as on the social factors that are associated with the process of differential adjustment and resistance to change of individual religious identity.

From a socio-economic perspective, members of the Muslim community in Ottawa are predominantly involved in business, as owners and managers, and in blue-collar labour as domestic workers. As such, it is possible to analyze the extent to which members of the community, who share a common religious background, differ in their modes of adjustment to the Canadian way of life. The Muslim community is a relatively recently established religious community in Canada. As a result, one can obtain some notions of the possible influences that length of residence has upon adaptation.

A sample of 152 respondents were selected to statistically represent the Muslim community of the National Capital Region, which is estimated at about fifteen thousand members. The methodology of the present study was based on selective and not random techniques. As such, the subjects were either chosen by the researcher or recommended by other members of the community. Thirty seven members of the research sample were interviewed and completed the surveys by the researcher, while the remaining hundred and fifteen subjects provided, voluntarily, the information needed

by answering the questionnaires. All participants were Muslim and were eighteen years old or older. Their level of Islamic observance was as different as their economic, educational, linguistic conditions, reason(s) of immigration, and ethnic backgrounds, but their Islamic identity was uniquely distinctive.

The following research techniques have been used:

a) Written Questionnaires

A questionnaire was answered by 152 (out of 250 copies) members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. regarding vital statistics, ethnic background, mother tongue, income level, education, occupation, religious observance, associational affiliation, family life, status in Canada, reason for immigration, and degree of identification with Canadian social mores.. Each questionnaire includes 189 variables (including system variables). It also includes, when, where, length of time, by whom, and if there were any other people present when the interview took place (see Appendix #B). Each case was given a specific number and all information was kept strictly confidential. Statistical analysis of the data, based on the survey's results, will be presented in the form of tables, charts, and figures. Survey results were collected by using computer programs including Lotus 1-2-3 and PrintGraph, SPSS, Word Processing and Word Perfect 5.1, etc.

Two primary languages were used: English and Arabic. All translations from the Arabic are the authors.

b) Participant observation

Although the research started officially in September 1986, the writer has been participating and observing most of the religious, social, and associational activities since 1982. Participation included:

1. Vice principal and teacher in the Ottawa Mosque School (Sunday), 1987-88.
2. Principal of the Ottawa Mosque School (Sunday), 1988-89.
3. Teaching in the Islamic School of Ottawa (Saturday), 1988-89.
4. Directing an Islamic summer camp in Perth, Ontario, summer 1988 and 1989.
5. In 1990-91, Acting Principal of Ottawa Islamic School (one of the four full-time Islamic schools in Canada).
6. Visiting on a regular basis many Muslim families, who participated in this study, in the Ottawa area.

c) **Unstructured interviews**

Unstructured interviews were held mainly with first generation members and leaders of the Muslim community in the Capital National Region. Their comments and observations are recorded here with their knowledge and approval.

Thesis

This study will be an analysis of the Islamic identity, as theoretically explored by Hans Mol, noted Canadian sociologist, and psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson. The findings will then be related to the notion of institutional completeness as it has been illustrated by Breton in his article, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants."³⁸

Taking the observations and findings of the research into consideration, this study will demonstrate that: for the Muslim community in Canada, and more specifically, for the Muslim community located within the National Capital Region, the preservation of religious belief is central to the maintenance of Islamic identity in non-Islamic society.

In summary, can Muslims in Canada maintain their Islamic identity, through ritual practices and strong religious commitment?

Canada's ideology plays no major role in the destruction of Muslim identity. Islamic

38

Raymond Breton. "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." The American Journal of Sociology.

identity, for some Muslims, is perhaps in an advantageous position in a free society like Canada. Does the survival of a minority Islamic identity in Canada show just how strong and adaptable the religion is?

To examine the individual's Islamic identity and his/her observance of the Islamic values, one should raise the following questions: How many Muslim immigrants followed the Shari'ah before his/her immigration to this country? Which set of religious and social values has been traditionally accepted in the former country, on the level of a) individual; b) family; c) community; d) society? To what extent can Muslim immigrants stay away from some Canadian social norms which are Islamically unacceptable and at the same time maintain certain values which can be permitted within the Canadian legal system? If they can cope with that, the question becomes; for how long can they maintain these values? At what price is this identity maintained?

I have divided the thesis into four chapters, and have included a summary, appendixes and comprehensive bibliography. Chapter one deals with Islam as a religion and way of life, examining the five pillars in particular. Chapter two deals with the sociological and psychological factors challenging the Islamic identity in Canada. The third chapter examines Breton's concept of 'institutional completeness' and its ability to attract Muslim immigrants, as well as Canadian-born Muslims, into community boundaries. The final chapter blends the previous three chapters, in an analysis of the Canadian Muslim identity and its maintenance, particularly with respect to political issues specific to the donor society as well as the larger Muslim community (Ummah).

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIVE PILLARS

The first obligation of a Muslim, no matter where in the world he/she may live, is to establish Islamic worship on a regular basis. Islamic worship is built on five foundations or pillars that every Muslim is required to fulfill. Prophet Muhammad has defined the faith (**Iman**), the submission (**Islam**) and the best models for human behaviour to follow (**Ihsan**). The significance of the five pillars for a Muslim is demonstrated in the way the Prophet spoke about four pillars in his Hadith on the second point, submission. Muhammad declared: "Submission to God (Islam) is, that one should celebrate the services of worship, observe annual fasting, perform the Hajj (pilgrimage) and pay the zakah-taxes."¹

The nucleus of the Islamic teachings and way of life are these obligatory acts of worship, **ibadat**, which are often referred to, together with the confession of faith, as the "Five Pillars of Islam." This chapter will explore whether a relationship exists between the five pillars of Islam and the identity of a Muslim, in the following manner:

- by developing an understanding of the five pillars of Islam;

¹ Muhammad Hamidullah. Introduction to Islam. Paris, France: Centre Culturel Islamique, 1969, p. 56.

- by looking at how these five pillars are observed by Muslims in the National Capital Region;
- by demonstrating a relationship between the five pillars and Islamic identity in the research sample.

Introduction

Shahadah, Salat, Zakah, Sawm, and Hajj constitute the five pillars or the cornerstones of Islam, each of which has its own spiritual and social value. The Prophet Muhammad said:

Islam has been built on five pillars: testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the prayers, paying the Zakah, making the pilgrimage to the House, and fasting in Ramadan.²

One who believes in these pillars enters the fold of Islam and becomes a member of the Muslim community. It is these five ceremonial obligations that draw the faithful closer to God and help them fulfil their duty to Him.³

The pillars also form the basis of Islamic law and shape Islamic identity. Although there are many different ethnic groups, cultures, and schools of thought in the Islamic

²

Imam an-Nawawi. An-Nawawis Forty Hadith. Translated from Arabic by E. Ibrahim and D. Johnson-Davies. Damascus, Syria: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1976, p. 34. It was also narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim (two different classifications of Hadith).

³

Caesar Farah. Islam. Toronto, Ontario: Barron's Educational Series, 1987, p. 134.

world, the application of worship is the same. The Islamic schools of law simply have different interpretations of what is expressed in some areas in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Those who believe, and do good deeds of righteousness, and establish regular prayers and regular charity, will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Qur'an 2:277)

The purpose of the Islamic worship may be, therefore, to strengthen the individual's faith and sense of submission to Allah and to reinforce the ties of brotherhood among Muslims. For example, the declaration of faith (shahadah) has to be always part of Muslim prayers. The prayers (salat) have to be performed five times every day of one's life after attaining puberty. Fasting (sawm) is for the full month of Ramadan every year. The poor-due (zakah) has to be calculated and paid annually, while the pilgrimage (hijj) has to be performed once in a lifetime if one is able⁴.

The five pillars are obligatory upon all Muslims no matter where they may happen to live, whether they are living in a society where Muslims constitute the majority or one happens to be in a minority situation within non-Islamic nation such as Canada. In order to analyze the five pillars of Islam and their importance in maintaining one's Islamic identity, the following questions can be raised: In terms of Islamic identity, how do Muslims in a minority situation perceive themselves and how do other Muslims or non-Muslims perceive them? More specifically, how do Muslims in the National Capital Region perceive the five pillars of Islam while they are living as a minority in the Canadian society, in relation to how they would perceive these pillars if they were living as a majority? To

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With respect to the Islamic law (Shari'ah), fasting and pilgrimage are obligatory only on those Muslims who meet certain required conditions.

answer these questions, in reference to the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., it is necessary to briefly examine social identity.

Identity in general is:

1. The state of being identical or absolutely the same; selfsameness. 2. Sameness of character or quality. Identity may be of two sorts: absolute, which involves exact equality with itself, or selfsameness, as the question $a = a$; and relative, a less rigid sense, which implies a close material resemblance or similarity, as that the green of two leaves. 3. The distinctive character belonging to an individual; personality; individuality. 4. The state of being what is asserted or described.⁵

In this study, three aspects might be contribute to the definition of social identity. These aspects appear to belong in three levels and are made of three distinctions.

I. **Spatially**, what Erikson calls a sense of orientation (ie. Muslim, not Christian): **Temporally** or a sense of continuity (individual, group, individual through the group).

II. Distinguish between **Abstract** or **Normative**, ie. defined by theologians (or historians), and **psychosocial** identity, ie. what distinct Muslims understand to be authentic Islamic life.

III. **From within**, ie. self perception (how do Muslims perceive themselves); **from without** (from outside), ie. perception of others, (evaluation of the Islamic identity by other Muslims or non-Muslims).

5

"Identity." Standard Dictionary of the English Language: International Edition. vol. 1. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1971.

Islamic identity in Canada may involve spatial reorientation and relative break in continuity. Specific deviation from the norm appears to be significant within the research sample of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. This perversion may be followed by conflicting perceptions of who is who. In this chapter, in addition to the five pillars of Islam, the above mentioned aspects of social identity and related issues will be explored.

The Research Sample

This chapter will demonstrate that a relationship exists between an individuals' practice and observance of the five pillars, and the level of Islamic identity which this individual reports. In order to examine the five pillars of Islam and their connection with the level of Islamic identity reported within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., 152 research subjects were selected. The research subjects were selected through personal contacts and with the assistance of other individuals in the C.N.C.R.

The Five Pillars and the Research Sample

Shahadah (Religious Testimony)

Shahadah means religious testimony or the declaration of faith. This is the first and the most important principle of Islam. To be a Muslim, one must testify that: **La illaha illa 'Llah** ("there is no god but God"). This statement is followed by a second important pronouncement in Shahadah: **Muhammadan rasul al-Lah** ("and Muhammad is the messenger of God").⁶ The Shahadah is also called the Article of Faith since it contains the best expression of the divine unity in Islam.

All of the 152 (100%) respondents of the research sample who participated in this study are Muslims and declare the article of faith whether by tradition or by conversion. Since it is considered the essence of the five pillars, the Shahadah can be seen to have a dominant impact on Islamic identity. When the Shahadah has been declared, other acts of worship should follow.

⁶

Farah. Islam. p. 104.

Salat (Prayer)

Salat is a systematic way of worshipping God. The position of Islam is that God revealed a form of Salat to each Prophet. The form given to Muhammad by Him is precisely the one practised by over one billion Muslims across the globe. A Muslim from Canada can go to Albania, Morocco, South Africa, USSR, Iraq, India, Malaysia, China, or Trinidad, join congregational Salat, and without the least difficulty perform one's worship in the same manner as he/she had done in Canada.

This systematic method of worship includes recitation of the Qur'an, repetition of selected words for praising God, standing, prostrating, and other postures and movements.⁷

Salat is the ritual prayer and the most important pillar of Islam. It is an essential obligation of Muslim worship and the supreme act of righteousness.⁸ According to Muslim belief, the Qur'an is the direct revelation of God passed on by His angel, Gabriel, to His messenger, Muhammad. Beside the Qur'an, the Sunnah (Hadith or traditions) gave greater importance to prayer than to any other pillars. The Qur'an states: "O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for God is with those who patiently preserve." (Qur'an 2:153) The following charts demonstrate certain types of prayers, and the observance of these prayers by members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R.

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A.A. Mawdudi. Towards Understanding Islam. p. 97.

⁸

Farah. Islam. p. 135.

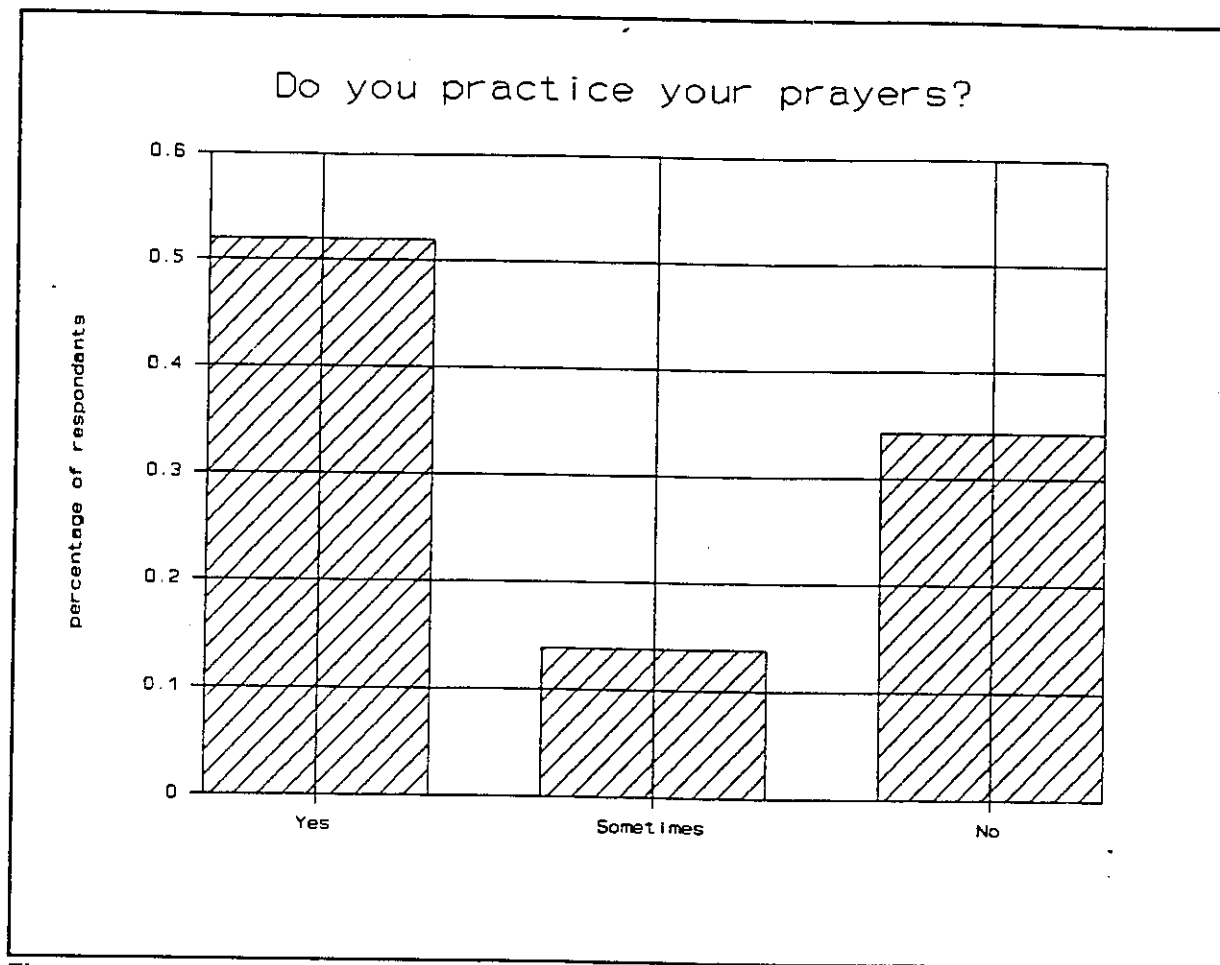


Figure 2

The Five Daily Prayers

The act of prayer (**salat**) is a well-defined ritual that is performed five times a day, **Fajer** (sun rise), **Duhr** (noon), **Asr** (afternoon), **Magreb** (evening), **Ish'a** (night). Each prayer consists of units of **Rakahs**, a series of movements and praises. All worshippers must face the direction of the **Kabbah** in Mecca. The Islamic term (**salat**) is somewhat different from "prayer" as used in the Christian sense. In fact, the word "worship" conveys the meaning of **salat** much more accurately than "prayer."

Ablution or ritual washing, Wudu, and physically being clean is a pre-requisite for the validity of any prayer in Islam. Wudu is the act of washing certain parts of the body which are generally exposed. For this ritual purification, one has to wash the hands, the mouth, the nose, the face, the arms, the head, the ears and the feet. Prayer can be done anywhere. Even the immobile can visualize the prayer in his or her mind, thus performing the prayer. Through the bodily postures of the prayer, which consist of standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting, repeated a specified number of times in each prayer, the Muslim expresses submission and humility to Allah. This is achieved also by the recitations from the Qur'an which are an essential part of every prayer. Muslims always recite the Qur'an in Arabic during salat, whether they are Arabic-speaking or not. A new convert to Islam who does not know Arabic may recite verses in translation in his/her own language.⁹ A Muslim is required to pray at the prescribed times wherever he/she may be, whether in a mosque, at home, at work, or in any other clean environment indoor or outside; however it is preferable to pray in congregations.

Women may attend the mosque prayer (in a separate section) if they wish, although they may also pray at home. This segregation is not due to inequality, but rather in order to maintain an atmosphere of devotion and concentration. Other aspects related to the mosque will be discussed later in Chapter Three.

Salat may be seen as a strong instrument to shape and a sure criterion to measure the Islamic identity, whether of a Muslim living in a minority (in the case of Canada) or majority situation, provided that he/she has the freedom to perform it. With respect to

⁹

Such cases were reported in the research sample of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region.

the psychosocial dimension of Muslim identity, , Figure #12 (see p.70) shows the importance of the five daily prayers, in comparison with other socio-religious activities of the research sample. It is rated the second highest variable among twelve factors.

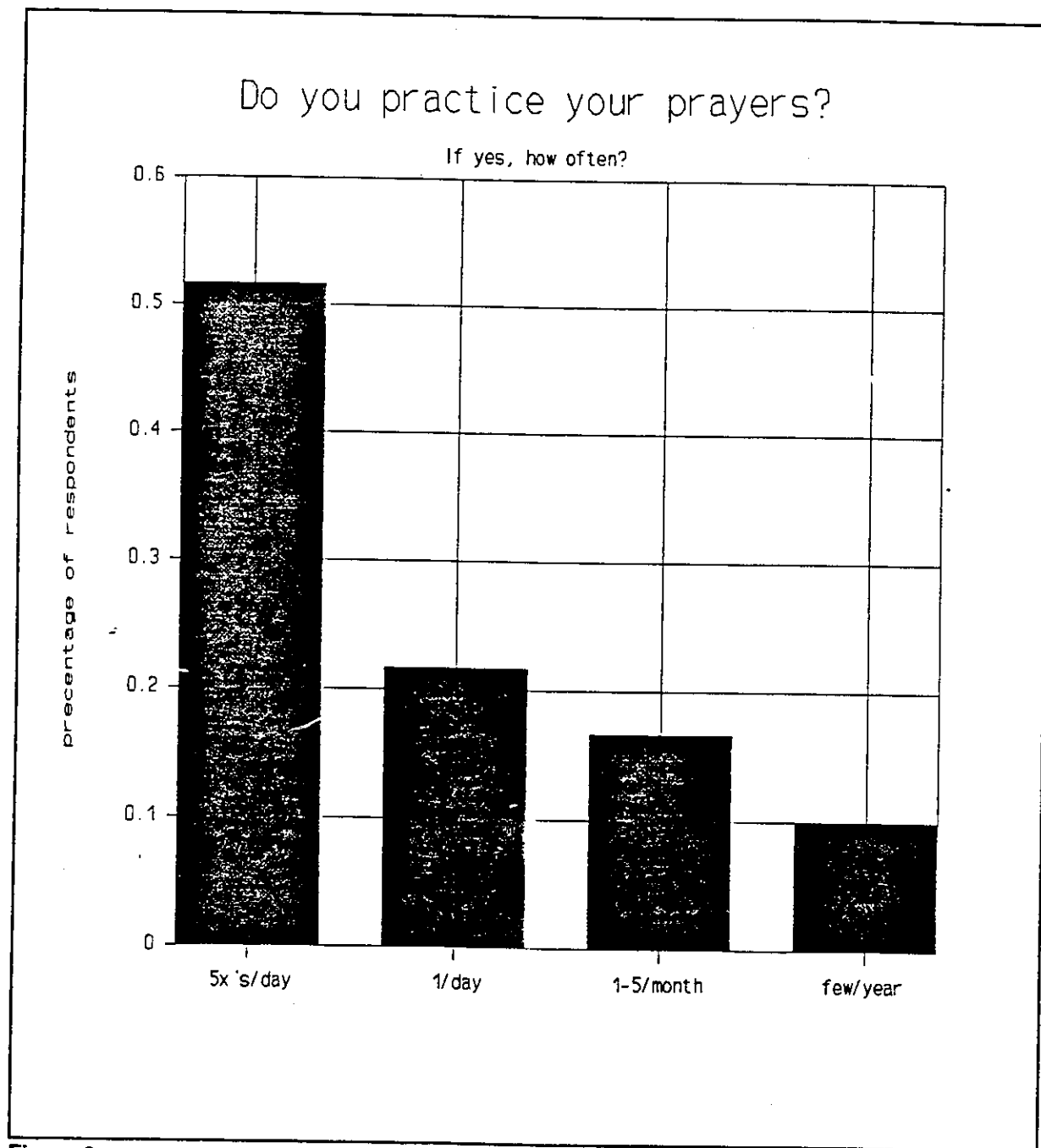


Figure 3

While the majority of Muslims living in the C.N.C.R. area acknowledge the importance of prayer, the question remains whether or not these Muslims practice it. When asked "do you practice your prayer," the majority of the 152 subjects of the research sample responded "yes" (52%) or "sometimes" (14%), while a minority responded "no" (34%) (see Figure #2).

Figure #3 shows the frequency of prayers reported by persons in the research sample. Adding respondents who reported "yes" (52%) and "sometimes" (14%) to the above question, 131 (86.1%) of 152 informants responded. More than half of the respondents said that they prayed five times each day (5x's/day). Slightly more than two-fifth of the sample reported praying once each day (1/day), while a moderately smaller proportion reported praying one to five times (1-5/month) each month. One tenth of the sample said they prayed a few times each year (few/year).

Friday-Noon-Prayers

Islam establishes a weekly congregational worship on Friday (**Salat al-Jum'ah**), which is observed around noon in the major mosques of a city, taking the place of the noon prayer for those who attend it. The Friday worship consists of a sermon concerning any matter related to Islam or the life of Muslims. The Friday-noon-prayer is

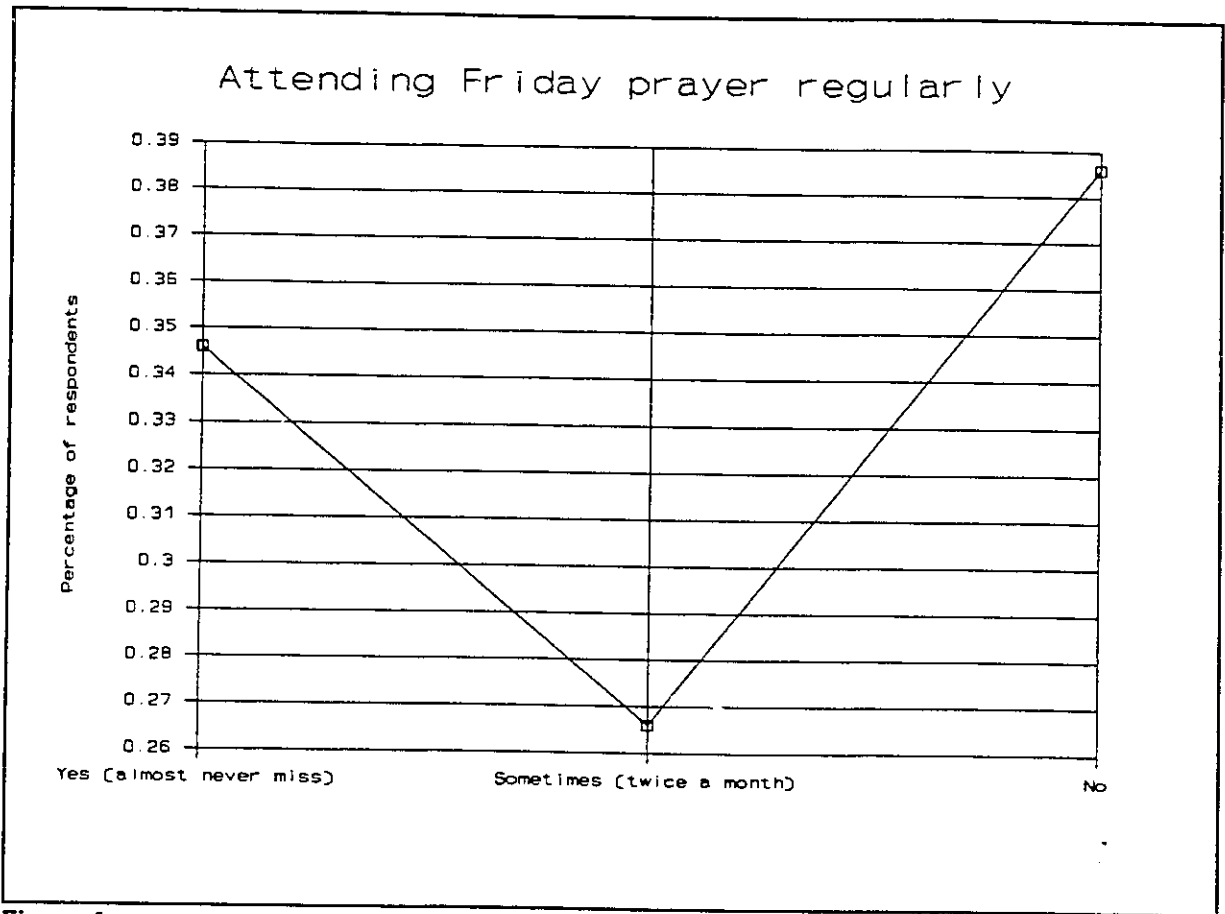


Figure 4

congregational, instilling a sense of equality, and simplicity.¹⁰ Although in most Muslim countries Friday is a holiday rather than Sunday, Friday has not been prescribed as a day of rest but rather of obligatory worship. Work and business transactions are permitted as usual before and after the time of the Friday prayer. The Friday prayer is mandatory for men, and optional for women. Because the Prophet passed away without giving

¹⁰

Farah. Islam. p. 137-9.

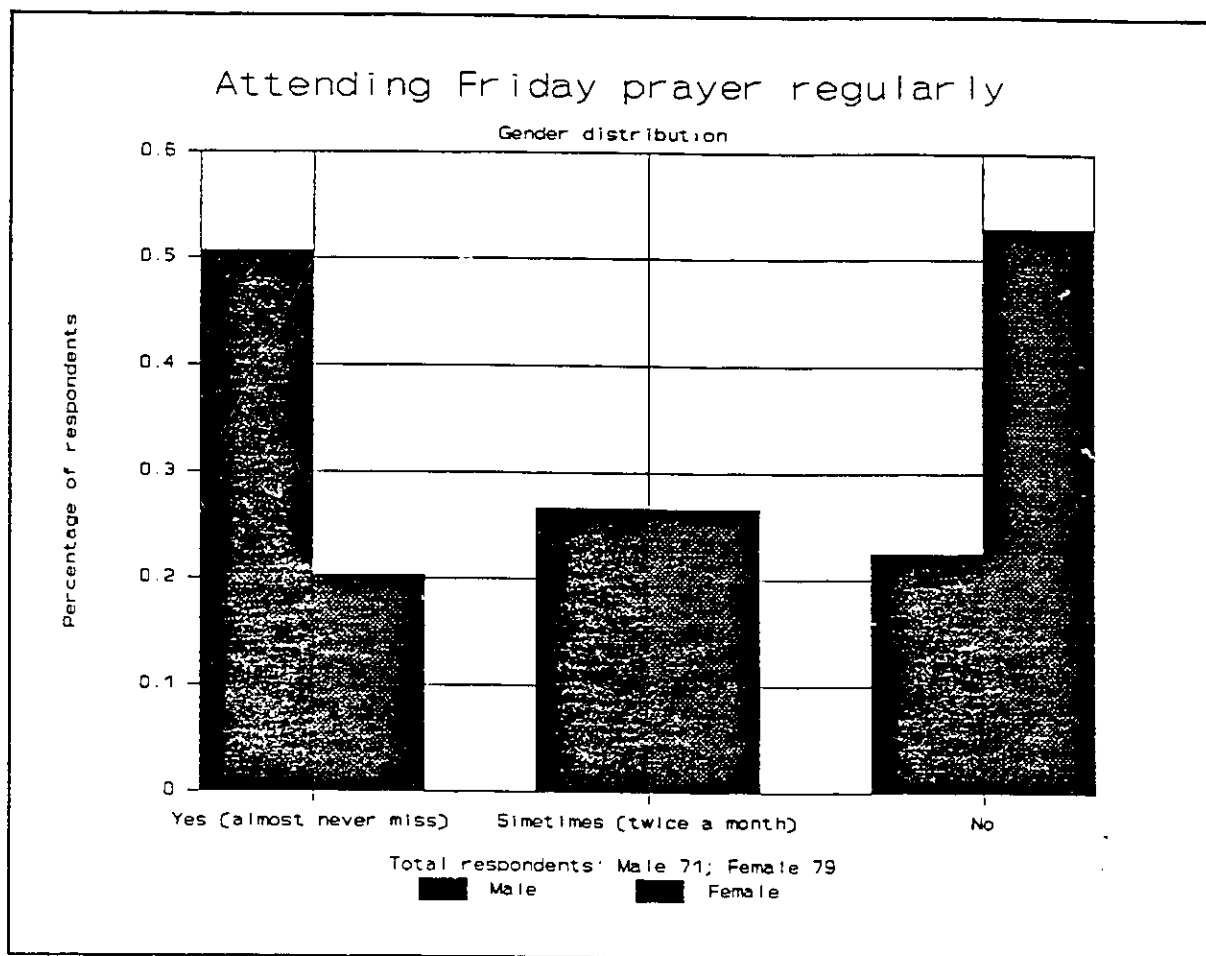


Figure 5

alternatives to a missed prayer, a prayer cannot be missed. Dr. Hussein Gawad¹¹, a microbiologist, asserts that, "if Fasting, Charity, and the Pilgrimage are missed, the Qur'an gives ways to compensate, but prayer cannot be made up."¹²

With respect to the question of attending Friday prayer, the majority 150 (98.6%)

¹¹

Dr. Gawad was the former president of the Ottawa Muslim Association, and replacing the Imam of Ottawa Mosque for Friday-noon-prayer in different occasions. Regularly, he addresses Muslims who perform their Friday-noon-prayer at the Ottawa Islamic School.

¹²

Excerpt from interview with Dr. Hussein Gawad, July 5, 1991.

of the research sample (152) responded to this category. Figure #4 shows that 52 (34.6%) out of 150 respondents of the research sample reported "attending Friday prayer regularly" (almost never miss), while 40 (26.6%) reported "sometimes" (twice a month). 58 (38.6%) out of 150 respondents of the sample said "no."

Figure #5 illustrates the gender distribution regarding the regular attendance of Friday prayers. In comparison with the females in the research sample, out of 150 respondents 36 (51.1%) males reported "yes" to attending Friday prayer regularly, 19 (26.8%) individuals said "sometimes," while the remaining 16 (22.5%) reported "no." Female participation in Friday prayer is lower, since the Shari'ah does not require women to attend this prayer. Only 16 (20.2%) females of the research sample reported yes to "attending Friday prayer regularly," 21 (26.5%) persons said sometimes, while the majority 42 (53.1%) reported "no."

The main locations where Friday-noon-prayer has been conducted in the Ottawa area are, the Ottawa Mosque, the University of Ottawa, Carleton University, and others such as the Ottawa Islamic School. Figure #6 shows the percentage of respondents of the research sample, who attend Friday prayer at each of the different locations. Out of the total research sample (152), 98 (64.4%) subjects responded to this category. Among these respondents 66 (67.3%) reported attending Friday prayer at the mosque, while 26 (26.5%) persons selected the University of Ottawa, 6 (6.1%) designated Carleton University for their Friday prayer, and "none" for other locations.

Beside the five daily prayers and Friday-noon-prayer, Muslims are required to perform other prayers. These prayers, which are not obligatory in comparison with other

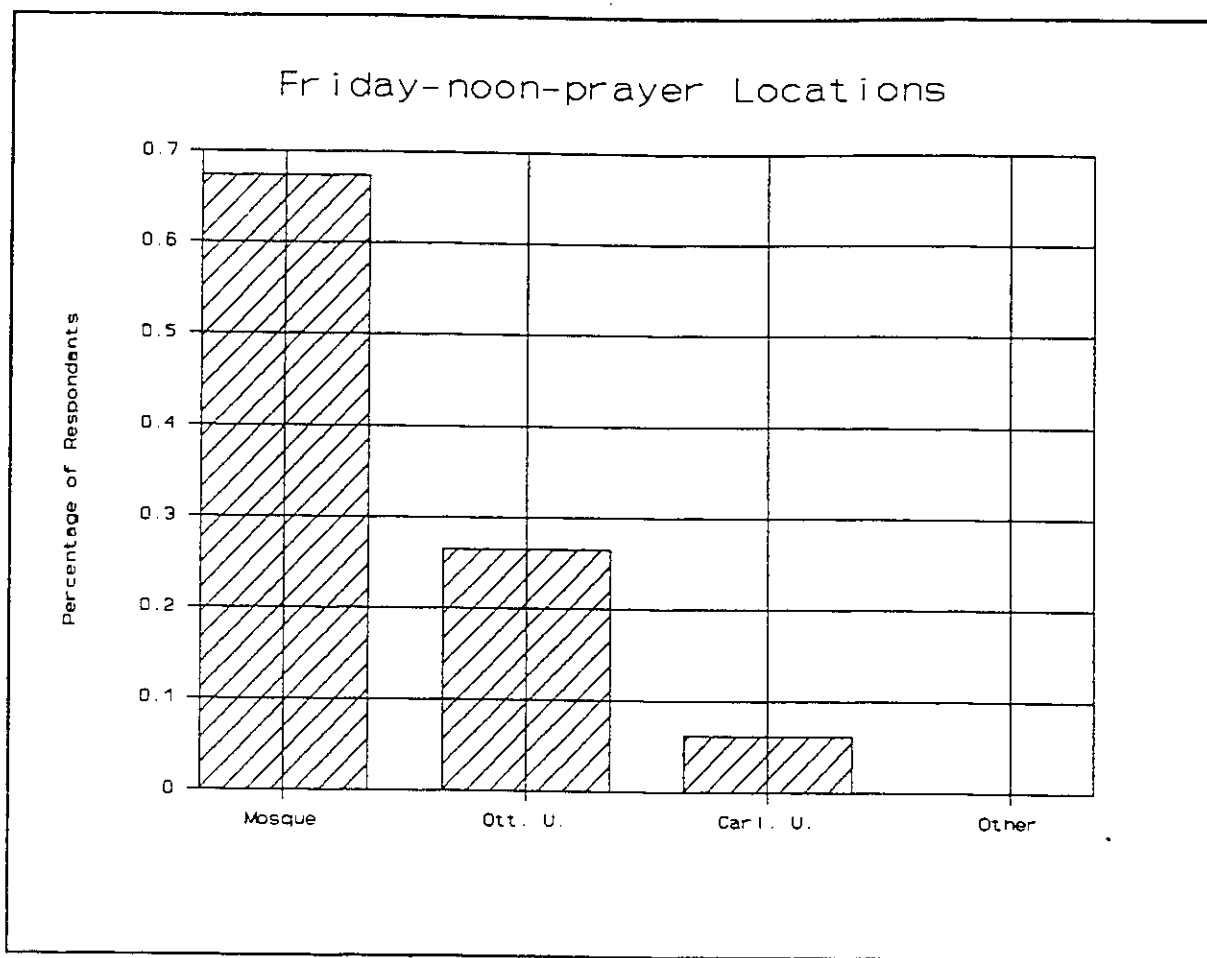


Figure 6

prayers, include Taraweeh, the two Ids, and the funeral prayer.

Taraweeh Prayers

Taraweeh prayer is conducted only during the month of Ramadan, after night prayer. According to different Islamic schools of thought, this prayer may vary from eight to twenty Raka'hs (recitations and movements). Within the Ottawa area, the mosque,

Ottawa University, Carleton University, and the Ottawa Islamic School are places at which Taraweeh prayer is regularly held. Approximately one fifth of those who observe Friday-noon-prayer attend Taraweeh prayer. This number represents primarily recent immigrants to Canada, and infrequent Canadian-born Muslims.

Id Prayers

The Id prayers (the festival prayers) are two annual occasions when Muslims celebrate. Id prayers are performed first at the end of the fasting month, Ramadan. This occasion is called **Id-al-Fitr** (the Festival of Fast-Breaking) which extends over a three days period. The second festival revives the historical legend behind the story of patriarch Ibrahim and his son Ismail, and called **Id-al-Adha** (the Festival of Sacrifice). This celebration takes place during the Hajj period (pilgrimage to Mecca).

While not obligatory, Id prayers is a strongly recommended and important tradition in Islam and it is reported that the Prophet ordered the men, women and children to proceed to the Id prayers ground. Id prayers consist of two Raka'hs, and a special speech given by the imam called **Khutba**. Id is performed when the sun has risen seven feet above the horizon and is held either in the largest mosque of a city or in an open area where thousands of people can gather.

How do Muslims living in the National Capital Region celebrate these two Ids? Id prayers are observed in almost every community where Muslims reside and gatherings to celebrate the occasions are common. A community-wide dinner followed by a

program with talks and suitable entertainment, youth social gatherings, a program or gifts for the children, and family reunion are most popular. Many Muslim children stay at home from school to celebrate these festivals, and in some areas the Ids are recognized by school authorities as holidays for Muslim youngsters. Although it may take a special effort to make the Ids festive, especially for the children living in an environment where Muslims constitute a minority of the population, it is a highly recommended ritual for Muslims as well as a social one, wherever they may happen to live.

For the Muslim community in the Ottawa region, both Id prayers have been taking place at the Ottawa Civic Centre, at 9:30 a.m. on the Id day. Attendance can be up to 3000 participants who live in the National Capital Region. Figure #7 shows the importance given to the Id prayer in relation to a Muslim sense of identity by research sample respondents (see also Figure #12). Importance was measured on a scale ranging from a value of 1 (not important) to a value of 5 (very important). The majority of the 152 Muslims from the C.N.C.R. in the research sample, reported that performing the Id prayers was very important to their identity as Muslims. Approximately 10% reported that the Id prayers were not important for their Islamic identity. As Figure #7 shows, many Muslims in the research sample considered the Id prayers to be fundamental to their Islamic identity. One community member who was interviewed on the question of whether or not he practiced his prayers replied:

I practice my Id prayers, and I do not have the time for other prayers.
Since I was young I never prayed five times a day, but I always prayed

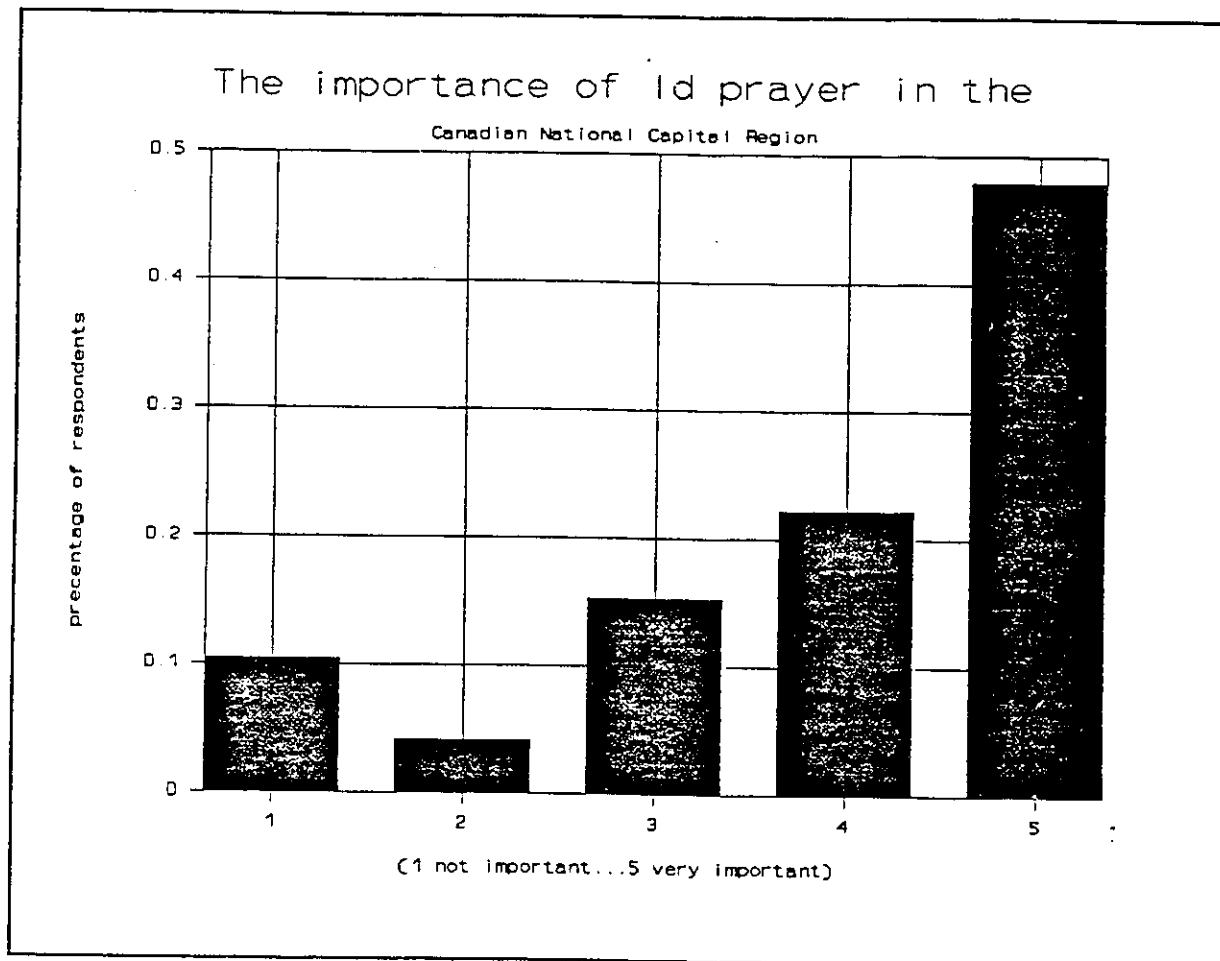


Figure 7

Id.¹³

A recent survey done by professors Yvonne Haddad and Adair Lummis on five Muslim communities in the United States demonstrated that attendants to Id prayers formed a special class:

... slightly less than a third said they attend only for the major holidays (Eids) if at all... Those Muslims who attend the mosque only for these high

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Excerpt from interview with a member of the Muslim community in Ottawa who decided to return with his family to his native country, Pakistan, after he had spent 25 years in North America. This interview took place at the time of his departure.

holidays we call "Eid" Muslims.¹⁴

Traditionally both Ids are occasions for exchanging visits with relatives and friends throughout the entire period of observance of each festival. Gifts are given to children, who delight in wearing their new things for the occasion, and special sweets (**baklawa** and **ka'ack** for a Lebanese family) or other foods (slaughtered lamb) are served to guests. Throughout the Muslim world, the atmosphere during the days of the Ids is distinctly unique, combining social with spiritual aspects in a way which brings individuals together to share a sense of belonging, solidarity, and commitment, which provides an awareness of cohesiveness within one's own community.

Funeral Prayers

Other prayers considered important in Islam include the funeral prayers. There are five main points for the preparation of a Muslim's body for burial; body-wash (Ghusl), wrapping (Kafan), prayers (Salat al-Janazah), funeral, and burial. **Janazah** prayers require a special performance which differs from the regular prayers. Although this prayer is conducted in the mosque by several members of the community, it may not necessarily indicate the level of Islamic identity since it occurs rarely and often under exceptional circumstances.

¹⁴

Yvonne Haddad and Adair Lummis. Islamic Values in the United States: A Comparative Study. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 33.

Community Perspective on Prayers

In Canada the ability to integrate the five daily prayers within one's work may not be difficult for a practising Muslim. "Whether one lives in the former country or in Canada," said an Indian immigrant Muslim in his sixties, "there is plenty of time for prayer in one's office during coffee and lunch breaks." Canada is not perceived by Muslims, who regularly perform the five daily prayers or Friday-noon-prayer, to be at fault. According to a woman, who teaches with Carleton Board of Education: "it is easy to practice Islam in Canada due to the freedom of faith and expression facilitated by the Canadian constitution."¹⁵

The example set by the family may be critical, but beyond that responsibility lies with the individual and the Muslim community. Although Muslims are required to perform other prayers, such as Taraweeh, the two Ids, and funeral, these prayers are not obligatory in comparison with the five daily prayer or Friday-noon-prayer.

Zakah (Islamic Alms-Fee)

Zakah, popularly known as the "poor-tax", means to return to Allah, God, a portion of wealth as a means of avoiding the sufferings of the next life, as well as a purification

¹⁵

Excerpt from interview with Mrs. Khatija Haffajee who was the former chairwomen of the Ottawa Muslim Women's Auxiliary, March 9, 1991.

for what the Muslim retains for himself of material possessions.¹⁶ Zakah is obligatory for all Muslims who have in their possession for one complete year gold of the minimum weight of seven and a half tolas or silver of the minimum weight of fifty-two and a half tolas. It is applied not just on gold and silver but also on annual income, investments, produce, inventory of goods, saleable crops, cattle, animal products, and all articles of trade. The annual rate is set at 2.5% of an individual's annual income (see Table #1). Zakah should be calculated on the net balance (**Nisab**) of the value of the articles of trade at the end of the year. Its proceeds are distributed in a way to assist the poor of the community, or for the welfare of Muslims and the propagation of Islam. "It is not considered right in Islam for the rich or the able-bodied to receive charity, unless out of necessity."¹⁷

¹⁶

Farah. Islam. p. 141.

¹⁷

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam. Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, p. 125.

TABLE: 1

SCHEDULE OF ZAKAH*		
Wealth on which Zakah is payable	Amount which determine the payment of Zakah (NISAB)	Rate of Zakah
1 Agricultural produce	5 Awsuq (653kg) per harvest	5% produce in case of irrigated land; 10% of produce from rain fed land
2 Gold, Silver, ornaments of gold and silver	85 grams of gold or 595 grams of silver	2.5% of value
3 Cash in hand or at Bank	Value of 595 grams of silver	2.5% of amount
4 Trading goods	Value of 595 grams of silver	2.5% value of goods
5 Cows and buffaloes	30 in number	For every 30, one 1-year old; for every 40, one 2-year-old
6 Goats and sheep	40 in number	One for first 40; two for 120; three for 300; one more for every 100
7 Produce of mines	Any quantities	20% of value of produce
8 Camels	5 in number	a. Upto 24. one sheep or goat for each 5 camels b. 25-35. one 1-year-old she-camel c. 36-45. one 2-year-old she-camel d. 46-60. one 3-year-old she-camel e. 61-75. one 4-year-old she-camel f. 76-90. two 3-year-old she-camels g. 91-120. two 3-year-old she-camels h. 121 or more. one 2-year-old she-camel for each additional 40. or one 3-year-old she-camel for each additional 50
*Fiqiz Zakah - Yusuf Qaradiwi. vol. 1. p.260-273 (Beirut, 1977)		

There are two other kinds of Zakah which Muslims must give. **Sadaqat-ul-Fitr** is a requisite charity. The annual distribution is essential (**Wajib**) for every Muslim who possesses on the last day of the month of Ramadan or the day of Id goods of the value

which makes them liable for Zakah. A Muslim has to pay the Sadaqat-ul-Fitr, which is equivalent to about \$5.00 in Canadian currency, for one's own self, spouse, and for their minor children. "Establish worship and pay the poor-due and the messenger, that haply ye may find mercy" (Qur'an: 24:56).

Another kind of Zakah is voluntary giving or donations. It has no specific period of time nor a fixed amount. This kind of Zakah can be given optionally to an Islamic charity organization. It is interesting to note that a member of the research sample reported: "I see no problem to extend my donations to non-Islamic organizations such as the United Way."

Since it is the duty of the Muslim state to collect and distribute Zakah, what do Muslims living in non-Muslim countries such as Canada do with their Zakah payments?

Dr. Tariq Bhatti, head of a Sufi organization¹⁸ in Ottawa, said:

Zakah can be paid directly, in such a way that it does not hurt feelings, to needy, deserving Muslims in one's own community; it can be sent to Islamic organizations or centres in one's country of residence to be distributed at their discretion; or it can be sent to individuals or organizations in the Muslim world for distribution.¹⁹

The adaptation for a Muslim who pays Zakah in Canada seems to be an easy one. Taking the findings of the research into consideration, one may suspect that the third pillar of Islam remains stable and virtually adaptable to a Canadian way of life. Zakah is as mandatory for worship and devotion to God as other pillars, yet the ways one

¹⁸

The official name of this organization is The Canadian Society of Muslims.

¹⁹

Excerpt from interview with Dr. Tariq Bhatti, October 6, 1991.

contributes may vary within the society and the individual's status in this society. The observance of Zakah for the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. depends on the individual's level of income and religiosity.

Both the host culture and the former Islamic society allow and provide for Islamic belief, and both have the distractions and choices that can be seen as weakening the belief. Yet, the effectiveness of Islam stems from the fact that it is a way of life which includes the political, social, and economical systems.

When respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of Zakah for their identity as Muslims, the majority among them considered it very important and an essential part of their faith (see Figure #12).

When a comparison is made between how Muslims in Canada paid their Zakah and how Muslims paid it in the former country, we notice that the methods are not very different. The absence of the Caliph, the head of the Islamic state in former times, means that there is no governmental institution which collects and distributes the Zakah at the present time. It has been left in the hand of the imam of the community and individual responsibility. This is the same method as the one implemented in the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. The Ottawa Muslim Association receives tens of thousand of dollars²⁰ every year in the form of Zakah or donations. Figure #8 illustrates the importance of Zakah for the research sample in relation to Islamic identity. Importance ranges from a value of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). 103 (67.7%) subjects of the total sample

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In 1988, the Annual Report of the Ottawa Muslim Association indicates an amount of \$129,700,00 has been received as a donations and collections by community members. Statement IV, December 31, 1988, (p. 7).

152 respond to this category. Nearly 70% of the sample reported Zakah to be very important in relation to their identity as Muslims, while less than 10% said it was not important. The importance of Zakah is mentioned in the Qur'an:

Lo! those who give alms, both men and women, and lend unto Allah a goodly loan, it will be doubled for them, and theirs will be a rich reward.
(Qur'an 57:18)

The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. considers Zakah as an essential part of their Islamic identity. However, a significant question is indicated in the research: While rated very important by persons in the research sample in relation to Islamic identity, how

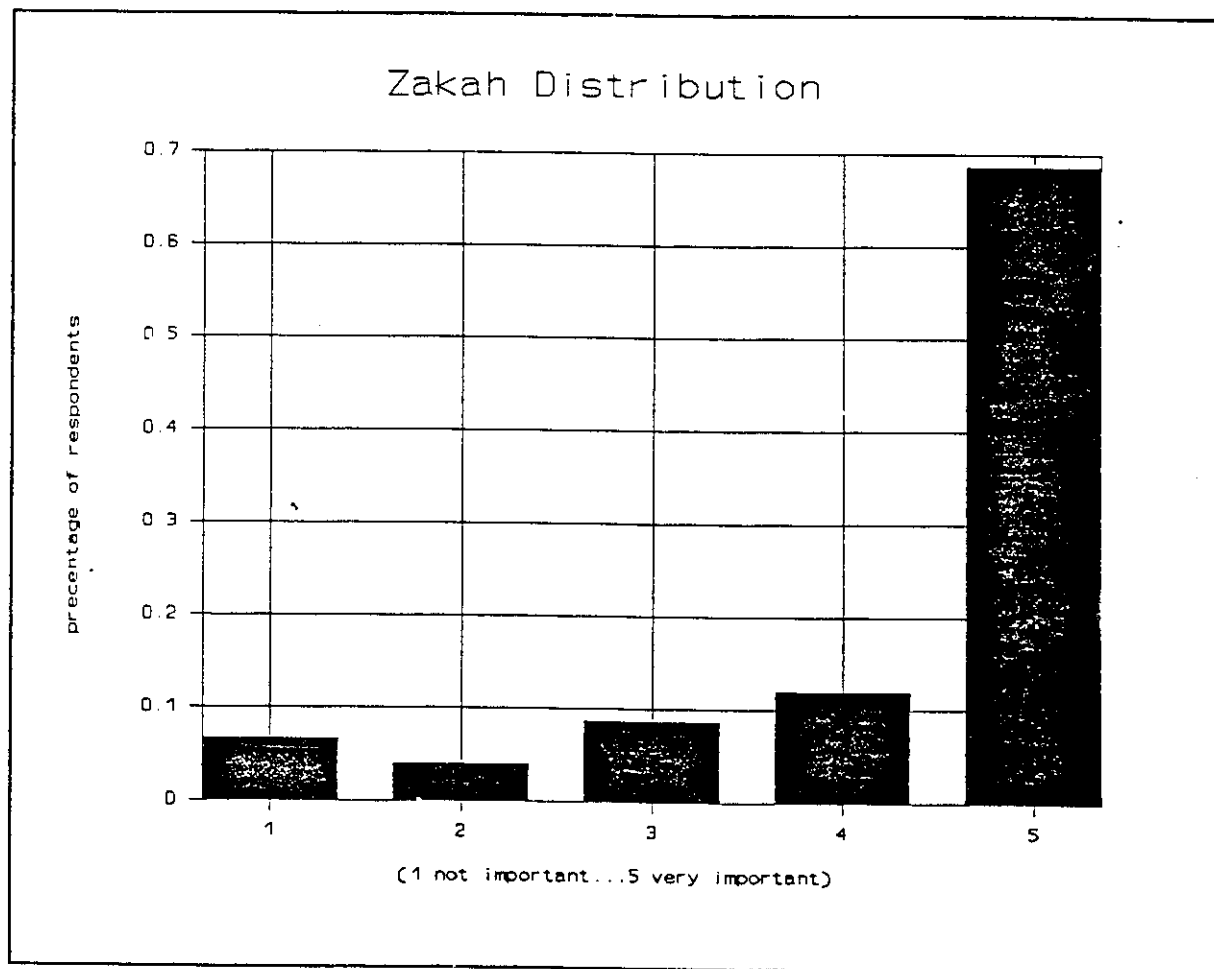


Figure 8

many of this group fulfil the obligation of Zakah? One community member who spent 23 years in Ottawa was asked about his Islamic observance: "I send my \$100.00 cheque to the mosque every year."

The majority of the 70% of respondents in the research sample who reported Zakah to be very important in relation to their Islamic identity, were among the most committed (strong identity) and less committed (moderate identity). Those who rated Zakah to be not important in relation to their identity as Muslims, were found primarily within the not committed category (low level of Islamic identity). This finding may be due, in part, to the low level of Islamic commitment and identity reported by these persons.

As such, a correlation seems to exist between:

- the level of reported religious commitment demonstrated in the observance of Zakah; and
- an individual's level of identity.

Ramadan (the Fasting Month)

O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may [learn] self-restraint. [Fasting] for fixed days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number [should be made up] from days later. For those who can do it [with hardship] is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free-will, - it is better for him. And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew. (Qur'an: ii:183-84)

Sawm in Arabic means to abstain from something. A horse which keeps itself

away from walking or eating grass is called **sa'im** in Arabic. In the same way the noon-time is called **saum** because the idea is that at noon-time the sun stops moving in the sky. Fasting is called **sawm** because it is an act of abstaining from eating, drinking, smoking, not allowing anything whatsoever to enter into what is understood to be the interior of the body, as also voluntary vomiting, self-pollution, sexual intercourse, etc. The fasting time lasts from the break of dawn till sunset during the month of Ramadan. Ramadan is determined by the lunar calendar used within the Muslim world, and the dates for the commencement of Ramadan vary according to the appearance of the moon at the beginning of the month. Generally, Ramadan begins when a Muslim observes the appearance of the moon during the last night of Shab'an (the third month of the lunar calendar). Ramadan ends when the Muslim has completed 29 or 30 days of fasting, and this period depends upon the appearance of the moon for the next month, Shawal. Ramadan is observed by Muslims world-wide.

The observation of fast is obligatory for all Muslims during Ramadan, except infants and people who are either mentally or physically ill. In some circumstances one can defer the observation of fast because of sickness, travelling, or in the case of a woman who is suckling a child. Women should postpone the fast during the period of their menses. Both men and women who cannot observe the fast due to their old age are also exempted.

Ramadan, in a Muslim's perception, is the blessed month of the year during which the Qur'an was revealed. It is a unique time for a Muslim spirit to be revived and for Muslims to show group solidarity with one another. Many Muslims consider Ramadan

as the only period of time during the year when they can pray and worship God. Muslims in Canada are not exempted from the obligation of Ramadan, nor from the activities which it involves.

The significance of fasting is perceived to exist in the habit of self-control which it fosters for an individual. Fasting is seen as a means of developing a sense of cohesion within the community and the family, and this may in fact strengthen a sense of Islamic identity. Fasting is also seen as a method which enables one to avoid being an easy victim to temptation. This, in turn, is held to minimize the chances of committing sins. It also functions as a social gathering and a time for family/community reunion. However, the most important aspect of fasting during Ramadan is the individual effort and commitment which is required, leading a Muslim to a discovery and strengthening of the sense of identity.

The fasting month of Ramadan has a profound impact on a Muslim's life. However, the consequences of Ramadan may be either positive or negative for a Muslim: either weakening, sustaining or strengthening his / her Islamic identity. A variety of questions surround any inquiry concerning Ramadan in relation to Islamic identity: How important is the month of Ramadan for Muslims? Does every Muslim who considers Ramadan important actually observe it? Is Ramadan adaptable to the non-Islamic society of Canada? What are the roles fasting plays in Islamic identity among members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R.? Are there any factors that might influence an individual's fasting after the immigration to Canada? Finally, what are some of the problems faced by Muslims in Canada during the process of fasting? In a statistical

analysis of the results of the research, nine of the problems facing Muslims who fast in Canada will be discussed.

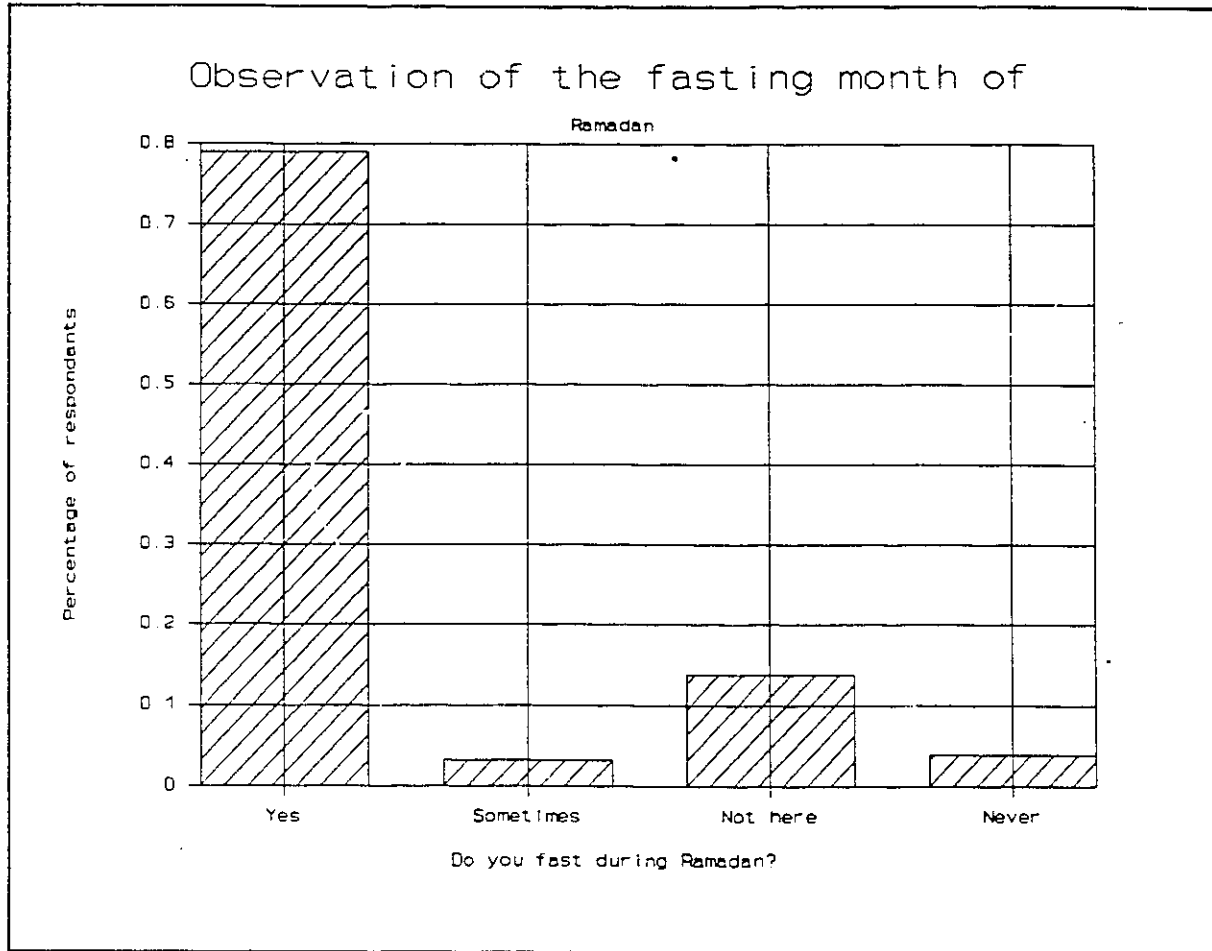


Figure 9

Figure #9 show the rate of observation of fasting by all members of the research sample (152). Nearly 80% of respondents reported that they observed Ramadan, and approximately 4% reported fasting during Ramadan only "scmetimes." More than 10% of respondents said that they do observe Ramadan, however not while in Canada. About 5% of respondents reported that they did not observe Ramadan.

It appears that a majority of Muslims in the research sample who reported that they

observe Ramadan are situated among the most committed respondents, and less-committed represents a significant proportion as well. Among respondents who are considered not committed, low levels of observance were suspected. The equivalence of rating an activity as very important, and observing this activity needs to be noted.

These observations are implied by inference through a comparison that can be made between the importance rating of Zakah (1-5) in Figure #8 and the observance of the fasting month shown in Figure #9. Since both Zakah and Ramadan are considered to be basic to the practice of Islam, some comparison needs to be made. If Zakah is shown to be significant by virtue of the scale of importance, then Ramadan can be shown to be significant by virtue of the rate of observance that was measured. In fact, based on the research findings, both Zakah and Ramadan rate as equally important with respect to Islamic identity.

There are a number of Muslims who do not fast, and present their own justifications and reasons for not doing so. Some of these reasons may be provided by in the Islamic law, whereas others are very personal and do not reflect attention to Islamic law. Canadian society may be seen as a problem for those who are unable to observe the fasting month of Ramadan. An absence of community solidarity, a lack of institutional completeness within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., the non-Islamic values of the host culture, and weakness of individual efforts to seek a religious direction may all be negative factors influencing non-observance, while at the same time affecting the individual's sense of Islamic identity.

The question, "Do you fast during Ramadan?" was posed to the 152 respondents.

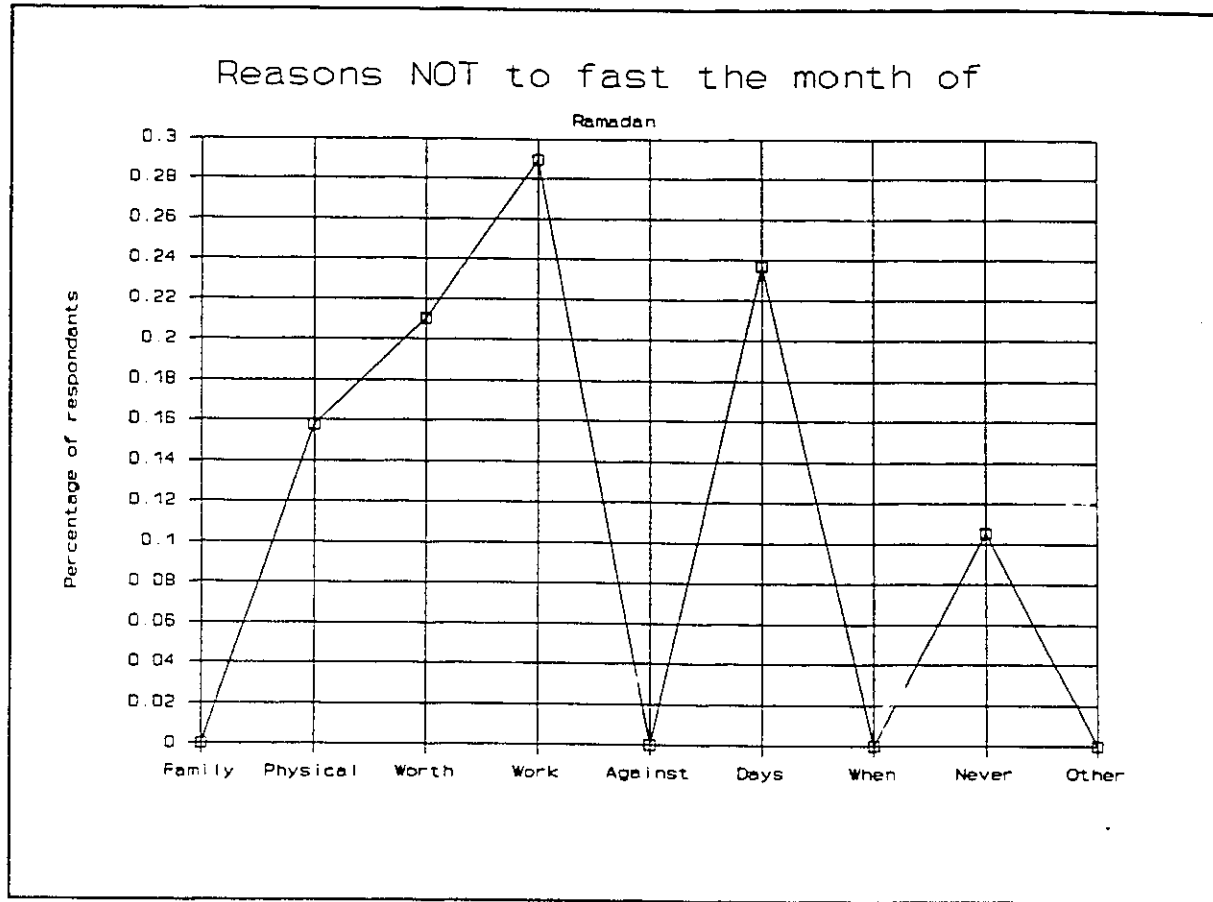


Figure 10

The majority, 93% (141) responded yes or sometimes, while 7% (11) responded with a negative answer, "not here," or "never fasts." When a negative answer was obtained, three important reasons were selected from a multiple choice list of nine possible responses (including one "other" category). Figure #10 shows several reasons indicated by the 11 negative respondents from this list in term of fasting. The multiple choice list is as follows:

1. No one in my family fasts. No one chose this reason within the research sample.

2. I have physical problems. This point may be made when a Muslim has permission by the Islamic law to break his/her fast for a medical reason or age factor. Out of 11 respondents, 6 indicate this as a valid reason for them to break their fast. These respondents may represent the first generation. Abstaining from fasting for this reason may not affect Islamic identity, since the Shari'ah permits Muslims to break the fast under this circumstance.
3. Being a good Muslim for one month only is not worth it. This is the second highest reason (8 persons) chosen by respondents of the research sample who reported problems fasting during Ramadan.
4. I have too much work, studies, etc. This response has the highest selection rate for respondents (11 out of 11 persons) who do not observe the month of Ramadan.
5. I feel that the whole society is against me. No respondents within the research sample selected this reason.
6. Days in Canada are too long. This is a fact when Ramadan is held through summer time in Canada. Days could be up to seventeen hours with sometimes extreme temperature. For some Muslims, this is cited as a reason for non-observance of Ramadan (7 persons break their fasts for this reason) and it has been used to justify their interpretations of the Islamic law which permits Muslim to break the fast under the term

of harming one's self.

7. I have no idea when Ramadan is. No responses to this reason were obtained.

8. I never fasted before. 4 respondents selected this reason for non-observance. That indicates that respondents did not fast before or after immigration to Canada.

9. Other (specify). No respondents specify "other" reasons for non-observance of Ramadan than those given on the multiple-choice list.

In terms of Islamic identity, the fasting month of Ramadan can be seen as having significant importance for Muslims in general, and for the 152 respondents in the research sample in particular. The argument that observing the fast may play a role in the preservation of Islamic identity will be taken up later. Ramadan appears to be well established in Muslim life (with a 93% reported rate of observance or some times observance), and at the sametime Ramadan seems to have been adapted to Canadian culture and values successfully. This fact is evident in the rate of observance obtained. Muslims who live in Canada seem to observe Ramadan without reporting problems.

The Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

The first house [of worship] appointed for men was that at Bakka: full of blessing and of guidance for all kinds of beings: In it are signs manifest; [for example], the station of Abraham; whoever enters it attains security; pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to God,-those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, God stands not in need of any of His creatures. (Qur'an 3:96-97)

The performance of Hajj is incumbent on all Muslims, to be fulfilled at least once in a life-time, if they are in position both physically and materially to undertake the journey to Mecca, and make sufficient provision for their dependents during the period of their absence. The Hajj period has a specific date and time in accordance with the Islamic calendar. Visits to Mecca at any other time of the year to perform the Hajj's rituals is called 'Umra.

With regard to Hajj as the fifth pillar of Islam, it is important to consider that not every Muslim can afford to make the visit to Mecca whether he/she is in Canada or elsewhere. In fact, successfully completing the Hajj is perceived by many as important, but nevertheless inaccessible for economic reasons. While there are many Muslims in Canada who have performed the Hajj, this number is very limited compared to the total Muslim population. The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. seem to report a similar situation.

Figure #11 presents the fact that only 10 (6.6%) of the respondents (151) in the research sample (152) performed the Hajj from Canada, while 11 (7.2%) respondents reported that they visited Mecca prior to their immigration to Canada. 131 (86.7%) respondents said that they had never been to Mecca while 1 respondent did not answer.

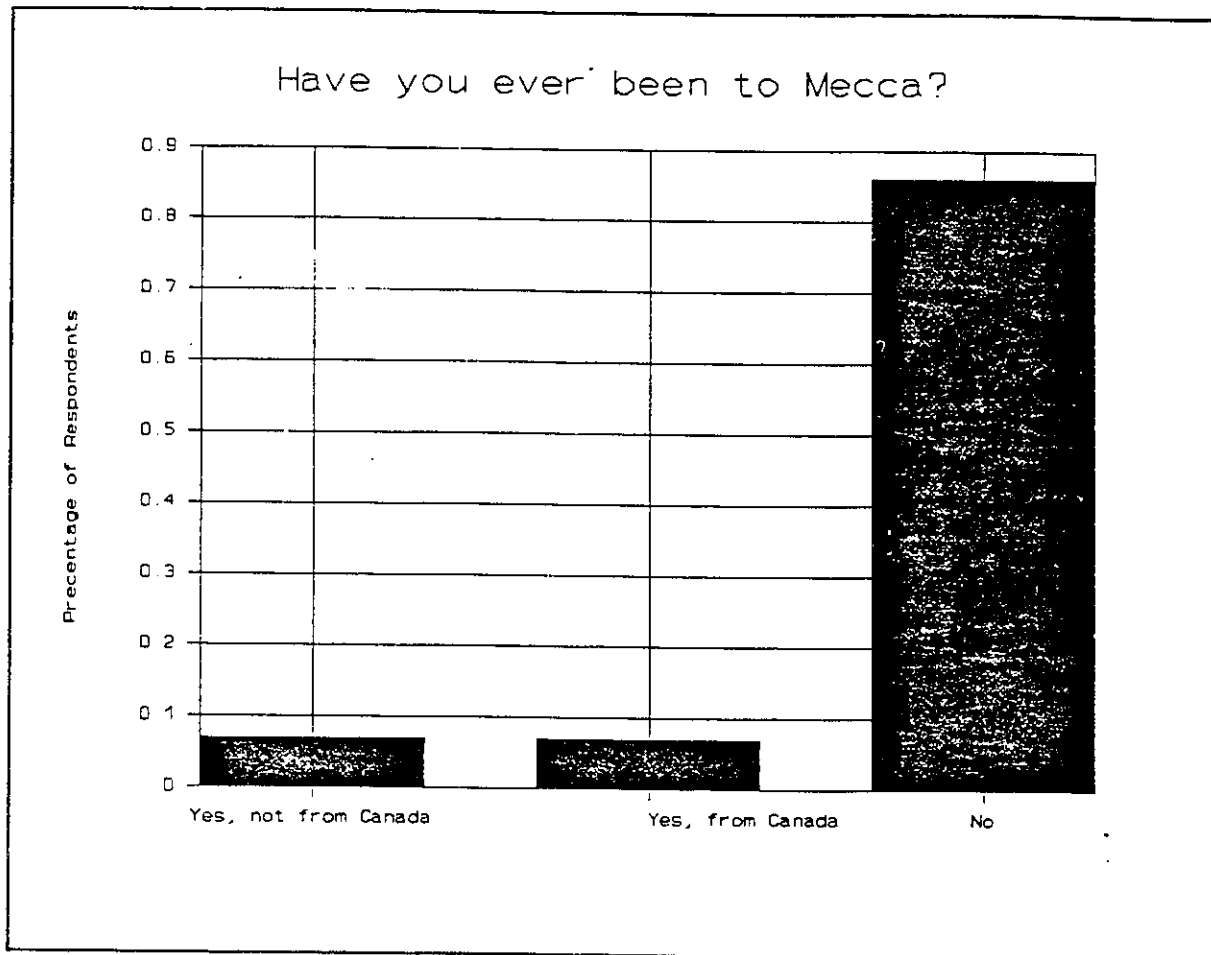


Figure 11

Pilgrimage to Mecca as the fifth pillar of Islam was required of all Muslims. For Muslims who can afford it, Hajj is seen as an essential part of their Islamic identity. However, very few Muslims can afford to perform it. For these people, the Hajj's importance is maintained, but realistic considerations prevent the journey. This inaccessibility by many Muslims is viewed as an unfortunate reality. The individual's financial status as well as the fifteen hours flying time may be detected as the main two reasons which prevent many Muslims to pay their pilgrimage to Mecca.

Concerning the Islamic identity, Hajj appears to provide an atmosphere of equality,

simplicity, and unity among Muslims regardless of their geographical, cultural, and ethnic differences. The concept of '**Ummah** or the Muslim community can be very vividly experienced at the time of pilgrimage. The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. indicates a feeling of 'Ummah in connection with the Hajj, which suggests that this practice is not just a strengthening of one's own Islamic identity, but also a strengthening of Muslims identification in a larger sense as well. The Muslim who experiences his/her identity from a minority perspective within Canada may gain considerable value from his/her identity experienced from a majority perspective of the Hajj.

Conclusion

Sample respondents were differentiated in terms of the level of Islamic identity, measured by twelve selected categories (see Figure #12) reported. A three fold correlation appears to exist between level of identity and level of commitment²¹ reported.

Level (I):

Members of the community who were among the most "committed" Muslims reported a strong sense of Islamic identity, which they based upon their "high level of commitment." This group included members of the research sample who were primarily

²¹

This terminology is derived from R. Bibby in his recent book. The Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and potential of Religion in Canada. Toronto, Ontario: Irwin Publishing, 1987.

immigrants to Canada, as well as Canadian-born Muslims. Within both sub-groups, Muslim students and recent converts to Islam were distinguished. Persons with this level of Islamic commitment comprised a majority (49.6%) of the research sample (152). Figure #12 shows the results of the group's self-evaluation of Islamic identity as demonstrated by their perception of twelve socio-religious factors (praying 5 times a day, reciting the Qur'an, paying Zakah, wearing Islamic dress (female), attending Islamic lectures, performing Id prayers, attending imam's lecture on Sundays, joining community activities, participating in family night, using Arabic language at home, sending my children to summer camp, and living in a Muslim country). It contrasts clearly the importance of two of the five pillars (praying five times a day and Zakah) with other socio-religious activities.

Level (II):

Other members of the community who are "less-committed" Muslims possess a moderate sense of Islamic identity. Individuals with this level of Islamic commitment constitute a significant segment of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. Based on data derived from their self-evaluation of 12 factors (see Figure #12), this group represents 30.4% of the research sample.

Level (III):

Still other members of the community can be classified as "non-committed" Muslims, and may be considered to possess a low level of Islamic identity. Individuals

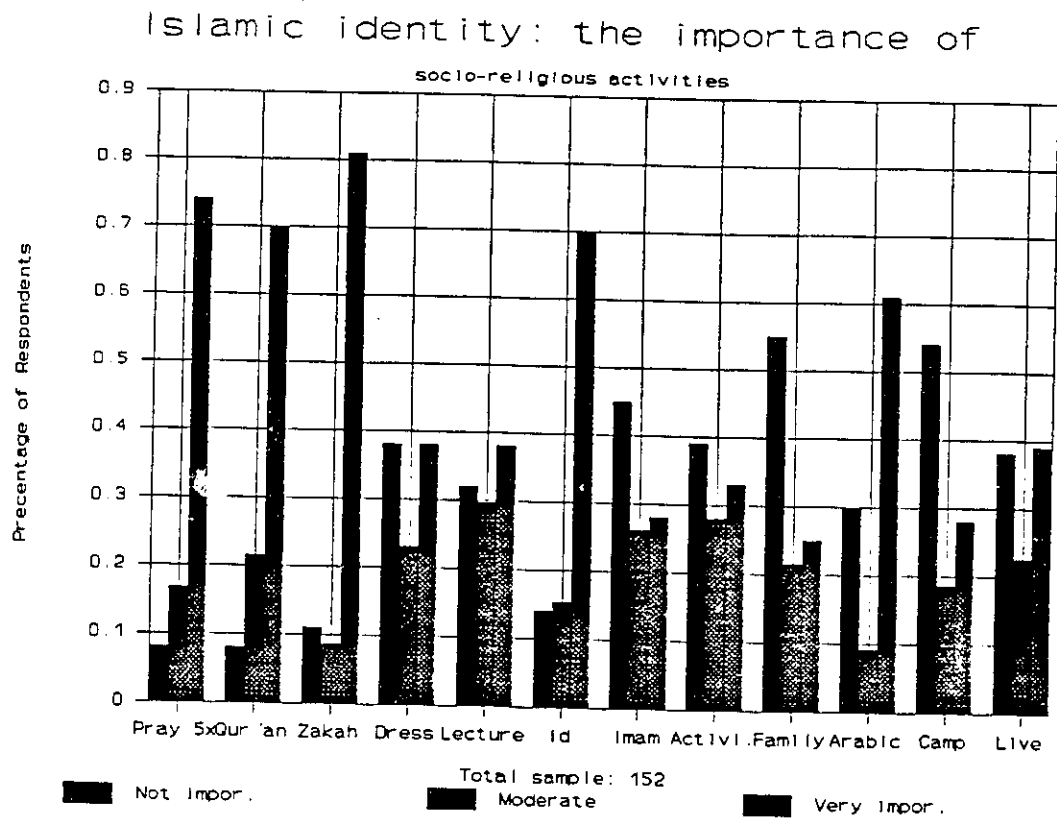


Figure 12

within this category reported a low level of Islamic identity, and based their persuasion upon a "low level of commitment." Based on the data derived from their self-evaluation of 12 factors (see Figure #12), this group represents the minority (19.8%) population of the research sample. It is possible that this low figure may be due to the fact that members possessing this level of Islamic commitment do not want to identify themselves with the Muslim community of Ottawa.

This distribution of Ottawa Muslims in terms of Islamic identity, in relation to religious commitment, shows the pertinence of the following question: Do Muslims have problems carrying out their religious obligations in western, historically Christian country like Canada? The next chapters will address this question and hopefully contribute to its answer.

If religious faith can be detected when it is reflected in visible or tangible action, then Islamic faith must be considered in relation with the levels of observance obtained in the research sample. One of the ways Islamic faith is traditionally upheld is in the Muslim's faithful observance of the five pillars: Shahadah, Salat, Zakah, Sawm and Hajj. Indeed, a Muslim's sense of identity seems to be rooted in the application of the five pillars to his or her own life.

Using the five pillars of Islam as a means of assessing the ways a Muslim consolidates with his/her faith, has provided a series of results in which observance of the five pillars, and, the importance assigned to them is shown. Furthermore, Islamic identity seems to have a positive correlation, with both the appreciation and observance

of the five pillars taking the levels of importance assigned to the five pillars by the 152 respondents in this sample.

Our inquiry so far demonstrates:

- 1) The five pillars do define the psycho-social identity of Muslims in Ottawa and, to the same extent, this identity is congruous with official Islamic identity as defined by tradition, except possibly for the Id prayers, which, although not strictly among the pillars, play an equivalent role;
- 2) Ottawa Muslims successfully maintain their identity by that standard, since the Canadian environment does not obstruct the practice of the pillars; however, a noticeable percentage fall short of these obligations;
- 3) The pillars shape Muslims' identity in Ottawa both spatially, (ie. the prayers at the Mosque or the Id celebration) and/or temporally, through linking with the Ummah at large; and,
- 4) Finally, the relatively high percentage of abstention in some cases, for instance Zakah, is for the moment without explanation, and need further research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

PSYCHO-SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND LIFESTYLES OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE CANADIAN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

Introduction

There are approximately one billion Muslims in the world, an estimated four million Muslims of whom live in North America. These numbers make it both imperative and difficult for North Americans to understand the cultural ethos, dietetic needs, socio-economic and ideological backgrounds of Muslims.

Islam is a religion which originated in the Middle East and spread to the surrounding areas. Today these areas are predominantly populated by Muslims with a sprinkling of small Christian minorities. What happens when Muslims move to a non-Islamic society where the majority of the population is non-Muslim? What problems do Muslims face when living in a non-Islamic community and how do they challenge these problems? There might be a relationship between the problems facing Muslims in Canada on the one hand, and the maintenance of Islamic identity on the other hand. Indeed, there may as well be a number of problems which accelerate the processes of

acculturation and assimilation for Muslim immigrants. These influences have been studied by Elkholy¹, Wasfi², and others. With respect to ethnic minorities in general:

The factors which encouraged rapid assimilation include either early arrival in Canada in the opening of the West or arrival after World War II; an original culture which was similar to Anglo traditions, language, and values; lack of prejudice and discrimination by outsiders; and scattered, rather than block, residential patterns.³

This chapter will address the relationship between some of the problems faced by Muslims in Canada and the maintenance of a distinctly Islamic identity. Some of the problems experienced by Muslims in the sample are specifically psychosocial, that is, they are problems affecting the psychological and social well-being of the individual. Other problems may reflect, more generally, patterns which are normally associated with lifestyles, that is, fundamental behaviours, habits and customs of the individual. Certainly, the term "lifestyle" refers more directly to the individuals' uniqueness as a Muslim living in Canada. Both psychosocial problems and lifestyles refer to the individual in the context of self, family, community and society. The relationship between the problems faced by

1

Abdo Elkholy. The Arab Moslems in the United States. New Haven: College and University Press, 1966.

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Muslims in Canada and the maintenance of a distinctly Islamic identity will be examined in the following manners:

- 1) by looking at some of the problems and conflicts facing Muslims in the National Capital Region;
- 2) by looking at some of the ways Islam addresses these problems through tradition; and,
- 3) by looking at some of the ways Muslims in the National Capital Region understand these problems, in the context of their own experience.

Problems and Research Sample

There seems to be a number of problems which arise whenever any minority group tries to maintain its identity and a way of life which are distinct and not synchronized with the identity and way of life of a majority. For Muslims living in the C.N.C.R., some of these problems include: drinking alcohol, dietary restrictions (pork), mixed marriage, bank interest, celebrating Christmas, status of women, the media, losing one's identity and faith, racism, discrimination, etc. The problems affecting the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. are ranked in order of priority in Figure #13 and Figure #14.

Figure #14 ranks the problems facing the respondents in the research sample within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. These problems are classified according

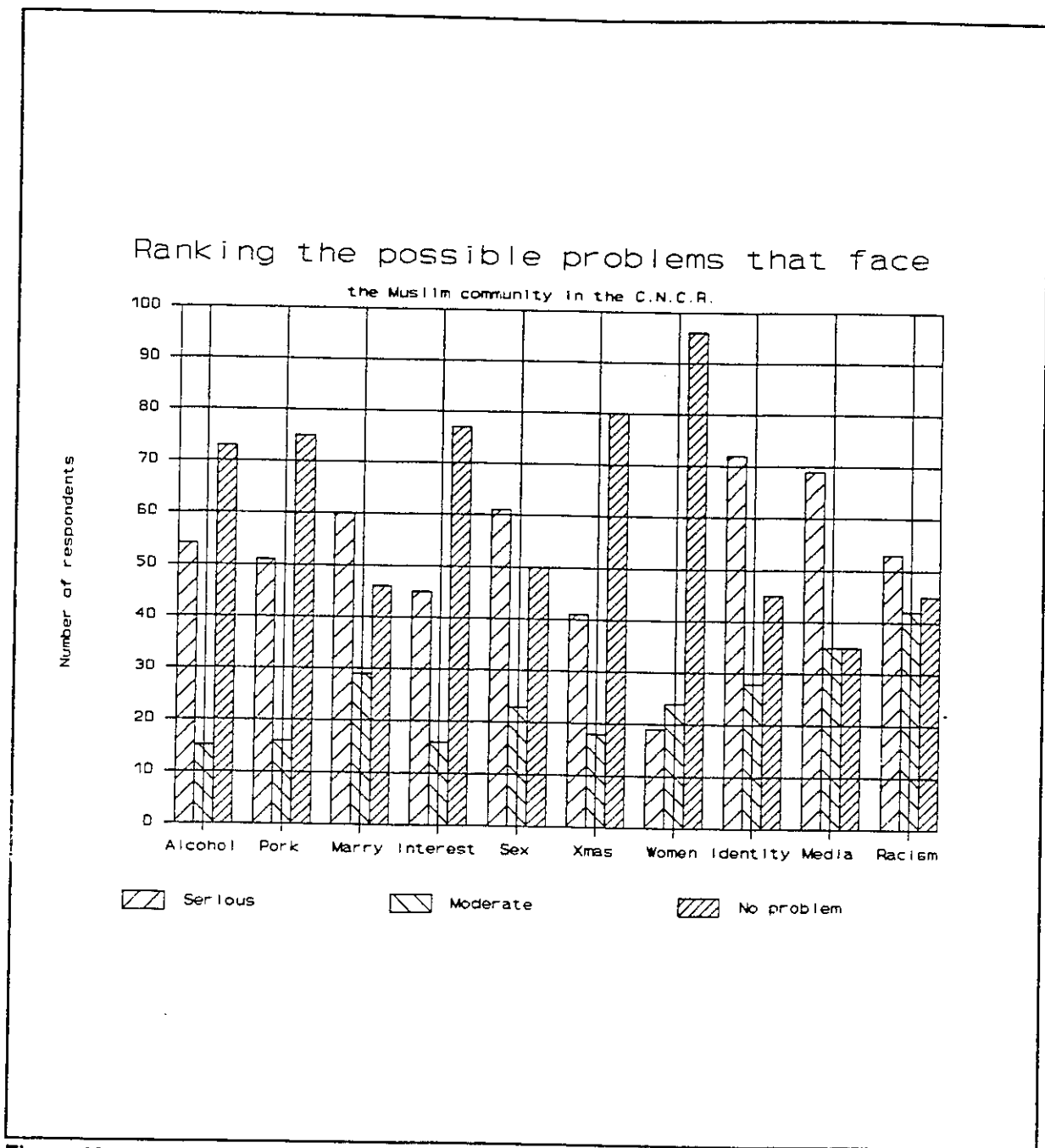


Figure 13

to whether respondents view them as serious, moderate or as "no problem." The following problems were generated in the research model: alcohol, pork, marriage, bank interest, sex, Christmas, women, identity, the media and discrimination and racism.

Ranking is shown in Figure #1 by number of respondents.

Figure #14 demonstrates the level of seriousness attributed to the 10 problems facing the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. Level of seriousness is shown according to number of respondents ranking each respective problem as "serious."

As a case in point, one of the main problems facing Muslims in Canada reported was that of trying to raise children according to the laws of their tradition, culture and religion. It is specifically in the context of child-rearing, where the sense of conflict between Islamic tradition and Canadian mores is encountered most acutely. The problem appears to peak for many Muslims when their children reach adolescence. Paternal authority is a very strong attribute within Islamic tradition. However, Muslim parents living in Canada may experience particular challenges with respect to this traditional authority over their children. Their traditional authority as parents over their children may be complicated by the conflict between the inherent and traditional values from which parenting draws its strength for Muslims, and the values of the host culture which appear to be different than this traditional and inherited form of authority. Many people in the research sample considered it very difficult to deal with adolescents, particularly when they perceived the laws of the country contradicted the laws of their religion. This issue was addressed in the research sample by raising the example, "children do not obey their parents" as one potential problem category which informants could select from a range of other problems. When 152 subjects of the research sample were asked whether this presented a problem to parents, 134 (88.1%) informants responded, while 18 (11.8%) did

not respond. Out of the 134 respondents, half reported that obedience of children is a serious problem for them, and one quarter said it was a moderate problem, while the remaining one quarter reported they had no problem with the obedience of children.

The problem of obedience of children was recapitulated by one member of the research sample as follows: a Muslim family living in Toronto had a young daughter, their only child who was born in Canada. The main challenge facing this family was that of raising an obedient daughter according to their religion, tradition and culture. When the child reached the age of five she began attending a Canadian school. At this point, the parents began to experience a loss of control over their daughter, with respect to their traditional aims of childrearing. As a matter of fact, this family felt that as their daughter grew older and became increasingly involved with non-Muslim peers, her gradual autonomy was accompanied with an increasing lack of parental control. This lack of control, on the part of the parents, was an experience of considerable anxiety for them. The father's fatal heart attack was attributed to the behaviour of the daughter. When attempts were made to counteract some of the effects of their daughter's independence (dating, drinking, smoking and social mixing, for example), the daughter threatened to call the police in order to prevent intervention.

Of course, adolescents are at a stage in their lives when they are achieving autonomy for the first time. During this process, Muslim adolescents may confront situations where their traditional Islamic values are challenged for the first time by values which seem endemic to Canadian society. Parents of these adolescents may perceive that their children are at risk of losing their traditional Islamic values, in favour of acquiring

Ranking the possible problems that face
the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R.

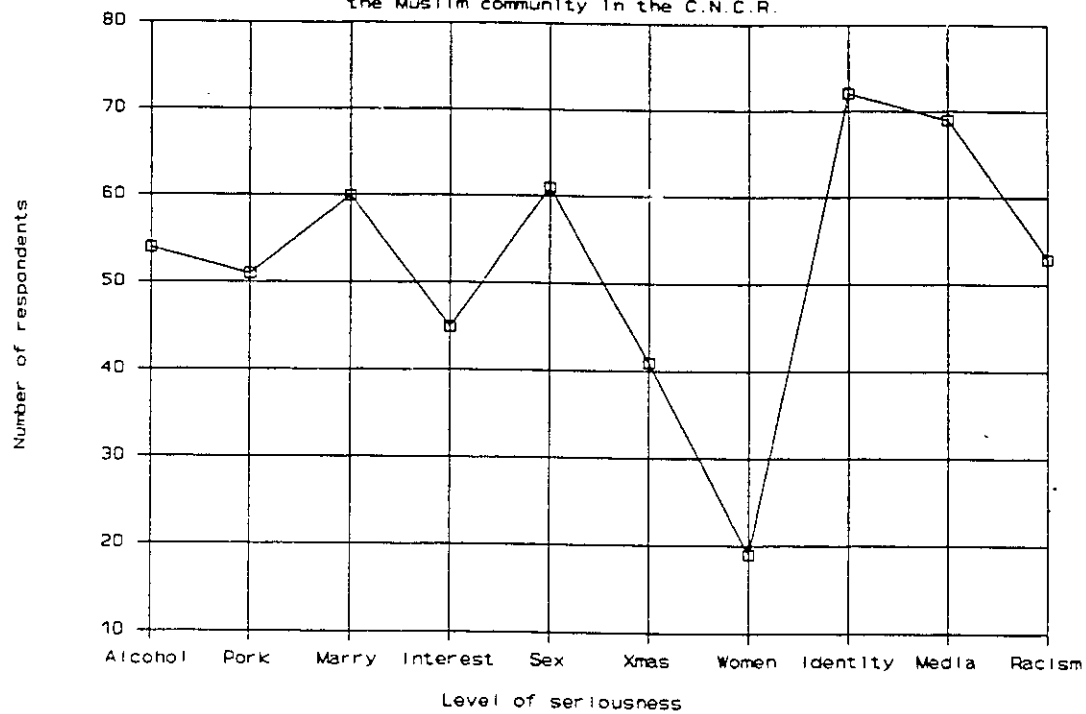


Figure 14

new, less distinct ones. Parents may also fear that their adolescent children are at risk of losing their Islamic identity as a consequence. In other words what is **haram** (forbidden in Islam) according to the Shari'ah for a Muslim, may not be illegal in the eyes

of Canadian law and customs. A conflict between these two ways of thinking may confuse adolescents, may influence their communication with their parents and peers, and/or may challenge their sense of identity.

Ten problems were presented to the subjects in the research sample in order to demonstrate and evaluate the kinds of conflicts experienced by individuals between their Islamic identity and the larger, social environment which is Canada. Several cases will be presented from the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. to illustrate that conflicts do exist between Islamic law and the laws of Canada, and that these conflicts come to bear on the individual, both psychologically and socially.

Drinking Alcohol

During the days of the Prophet Muhammad, the sources for making alcoholic beverages were grapes, dates, wheat, barley and honey. Although alcohol can be prepared nowadays from many other sources, it is still considered to be forbidden for Muslims as long as it intoxicates people. Islam emphasizes that the effects of alcohol on people are more important than the origins of alcoholic substances.

The information relating to the prohibition of alcohol in Islam is obtained directly from the sayings of Allah in the Qur'an as well as the sayings of Muhammad. The prohibition of alcoholic beverages is mentioned three times in the Qur'an. In the chapter (Surah) of "The Table Spread," Allah says:

O you who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, idols, and raffles, are only a filthy work of Satan, turn aside from them so that you may prosper. Satan only wants to stir up enmity and jealousy among you by means of intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from remembering God, and from praying: So will you not then abstain? (Qur'an 5:93-94)

According to the Islamic law (Shari'ah), a Muslim is not permitted to eat or drink prohibited foods or liquids under any conditions except when this happens unknowingly, under duress, or in an emergency. In Canada, on the other hand, if an adolescent has reached the legal drinking age, the law is intended to protect the individual's right to buy and drink alcohol; however, Islamic law considers the intention and outcome of the laws concerning alcohol in Canada haram. Furthermore, Islamic law does not recognize that these rights exist for individuals.

The sense of freedom which is permitted by Canadian laws concerning alcohol may be perceived by Muslim parents as contributing to an eventual loss of control over their children. This may also lead to confusion on the part of Muslim adolescents. An adolescent may begin questioning the foundations of his/her religion which leads, according to many Muslim parents, to a gradual loss of Islamic identity. Once they become aware of Canadian laws concerning alcohol, and confronted by pressure from peers, some young Muslims may also develop an attitude of "why can't I drink, it's not illegal," or "everyone else is drinking." It seems to be a custom in North America to go out drinking, especially on one's eighteenth or nineteenth birthday (or whenever the legal drinking age is reached in a given area). This is a great temptation, especially if one's peers insist upon the adolescent's participation in the drinking custom. Adolescents begin to feel confused between what is legally upheld, reinforced by peers, yet clearly

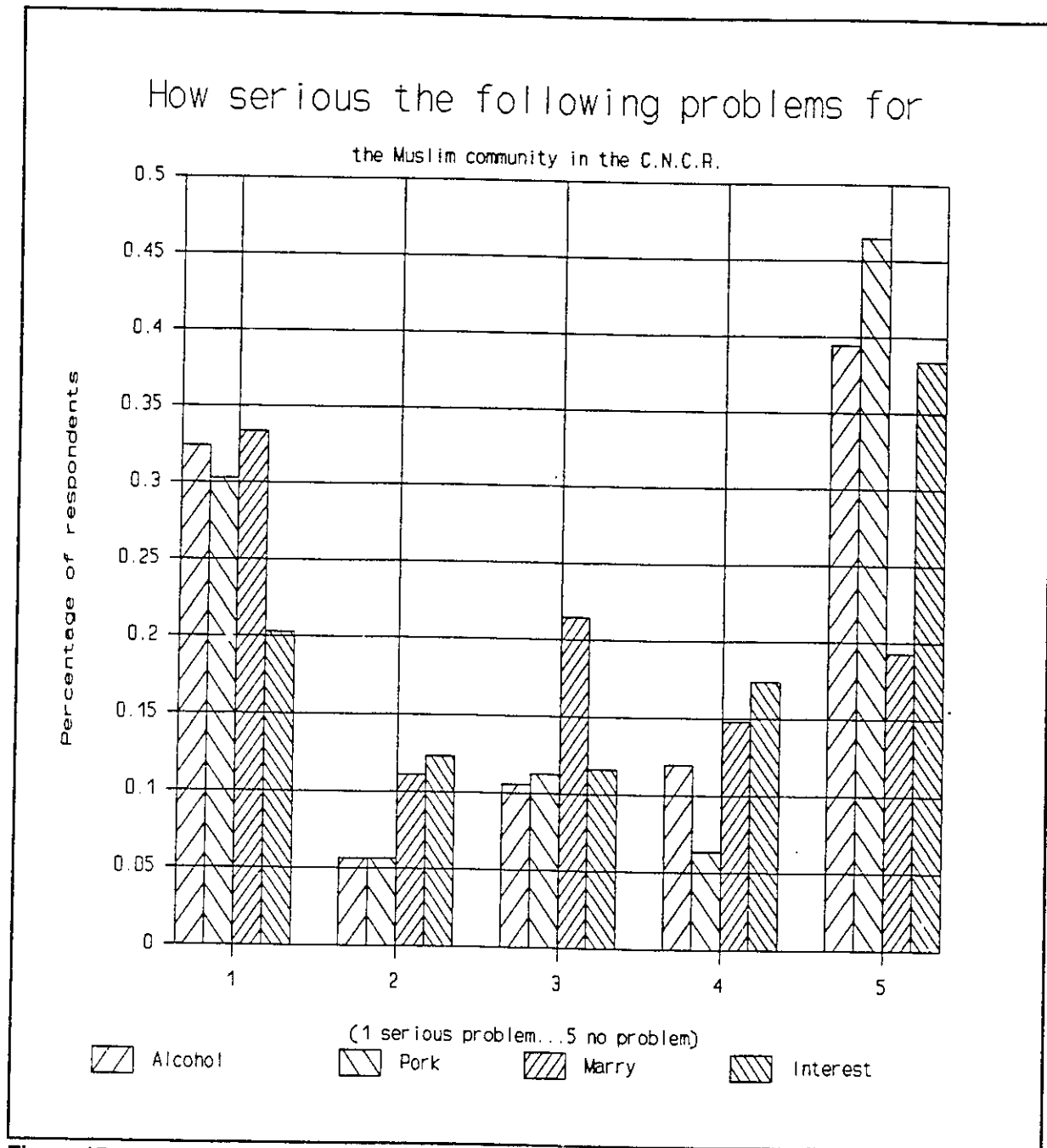


Figure 15

haram according to their religious laws. These confused attitudes, structured between what is legally "right" and what is haram in Islam, may, in part, lead the adolescent to a departure from Islamic laws concerning alcohol in favour of those of a more permissive

society. For a Muslim adolescent, this may justify his/her departure from Islamic law in the first place. However, parents also struggle between religious values and legal rights because legally they cannot prevent their legal-aged children from drinking, no matter how much they may oppose it on religious and traditional bases. Parents may rightly believe their children are straying away from the values and ideals of their religion which, they feel, provides for a distinctly Islamic identity.

According to the research sample, 142 of 152 respondents (93.4%) selected drinking alcohol from a list of 10 problems as a possible problem for Canadian Muslims. 10 (6.5%) of the sample did not respond. Figure #15 shows the ratings assigned by 142 informants to drinking alcohol. The range of seriousness was measured on a scale ranging from a value of one + two (serious problem) to a value of four + five (no problem), while a value of three represents a moderate level of seriousness.

When informants were asked to evaluate how serious they considered drinking alcohol as a possible problem for Canadian Muslims, the answer was: approximately half of the 142 (93%) respondents in the C.N.C.R. sample reported that drinking alcohol was a serious problem⁴ in their experience as Canadian Muslims. 54 (38%) persons of the 142 respondents to this item reported no problem⁵ with drinking alcohol, while 15 (10.5%)

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For these respondents, rating alcohol as "serious problem" can mean; they drink alcohol but sense a guilt feeling; serious problems but with respect to other Muslims; according to the level of violation within the Islamic law which leads to the level of religious observance (see Table 1); or serious problem in case of alcoholic addiction in general terms.

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Respondents who reported "no problem" to drinking alcohol said so because they do not drink alcohol at all for health or religious reasons (as some non-Muslims do); they enjoy drinking and see no religious or economic harm; or have a strong sense of religious commitment which leads the individual to observe the Islamic law when and wherever they might be residing. It is also important to know that the majority of

gave a moderate rating (3).

Regarding religious observance, sample respondents also differed in their response to the problem of alcohol. The majority of respondents who rated "high" or "average" religious observance reported the highest level of seriousness (81%) to the question of alcohol, while those that rated "fair" or "poor" religious observance selected "no problem" (39%) (see Table #2).

TABLE: 2 Distribution of Alcohol by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Serious problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	8	1	6	1	7	23 21.5
Average	21	6	5	3	20	55 51.4
Fair	6		1	5	10	22 20.6
Poor	2			1	4	7 6.5
	37	7	12	10	41	107
Total	34.6	6.5	11.2	9.3	38.3	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 45						

today's Muslim countries permits, legally, the consumption of alcohol, so Muslim immigrants from these societies are not different from Canadian non-Muslims

Dietary Restrictions

Like other problems that face members of the sample from the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., dietary restrictions might present additional pressure. Such as other good things in life, food and drink are not to be taken for granted. Which foods and drinks are permitted for Muslims and which are prohibited? The Islamic principle is that whatever is not specifically (or by analogy) prohibited is permissible; hence all foods and drinks are allowed with the exception of the following which are specifically prohibited in the Qur'an: (1) anything which intoxicates or interferes with the clear functioning of the mind, in any quantity or form; (2) pork and its by-products in any form; (3) the flesh of animals which have died without being slaughtered and bled fully; (4) blood; and (5) any food over which the name of a deity other than God has been invoked and the meat of an animal slaughtered in the name of anyone other than God.

He hath only forbidden you dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of God. But if one is forced by necessity, without wilful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, - then is he guiltless. For God is oft-forgiving most merciful. (Qur'an 2:173)

The manner of slaughtering an animal prescribed by Islam is to slit its throat while saying "**Bismillah, Allahu Akbar**" (In the name of Allah, Allah is the most great) in an acknowledgment that the life of this creature of God is taken by His permission to meet one's lawful need for food. The animal is then bled completely. Consequently, many Muslims living in non-Islamic societies where God's name is not pronounced at the time of slaughter or where animals are slaughtered in different manner consider commercial

meat to be unlawful to Muslims. These Muslims either have access to a Muslim or a 'kosher' meat service, slaughter their own animals from time to time, or do without meat. Another opinion holds that since the Qur'an is quite explicit in stating that the food of Christians and Jews is lawful for Muslims, Muslims who live in Christian countries (such as Canada) may eat commercial meat (apart from pork), pronouncing God's name on it at the time of eating. Today Muslim butchers and meat services are becoming increasingly common in western countries so that Muslims may have meat slaughtered according to their religion. In the National Capital Region for instance, **halal meat** (meat products produced according to the Islamic manner of slaughtering) can be purchased in almost every area of the city.

It should be noted that pork and its by-products which are primarily its fat (ie. Lard) and gelatin (can be found in desserts, salads, marshmallows, cake fillings, candies, and other foods), were also prohibited by the Shari'ah.

Dietary restrictions were collapsed, for the purpose of the research, into the single category of "eating pork." The findings regarding pork are shown in Figure #15. Within the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., out of the 152 sample respondents surveyed, 142 (93.4%) responded to the problem of pork, while 10 respondents (6.5%) did not report. Just over one-third of the 142 respondents ranked eating pork as a serious problem, half reported no problem, while the remaining 16 (11.2%) gave a moderate rating.

Table #3 shows half of the respondents who reported a "high" level of religious observance considered "eating pork" "no problem." Similarly, half of those who reported

an "average" level of observance reported "serious problem" to this category (see Table #3). The majority (69.5%) of those who reported a "fair" level of religious observance valued eating pork as "no problem," while a minority (6.5%) of those who reported a "poor" level of religious observance classified pork as a "serious problem."

TABLE: 3 Distribution of Pork by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Serious problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	5	1	5	1	10	22 20.6
Average	21	6	5	3	20	55 51.4
Fair	5		2	3	13	23 21.5
Poor	2		1		4	7 6.5
	33	7	13	7	47	107
Total	30.8	6.5	12.1	6.5	43.9	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 45						

Mixed Marriage

Another problem that Muslim parents experience is the fear that their children will marry a non-Muslim. For many sociologists, mixed marriage is considered to be the first agent of assimilation and acculturation of an ethnic minority. In a sociological study of

two Muslim communities in the United States conducted by A. Elkholy, "there is no doubt that mixed religious marriage in both communities is one of the strongest agencies of assimilation."⁶ Many Muslims reported that mixed marriage is less of a problem if the child is a boy, since this is permitted in Islam.

This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book⁷ is lawful unto you and yours lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book revealed before your time, - when ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues. If any one rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good). (Qur'an 5:6)

Mixed marriage between a Muslim girl and a non-Muslim boy is seen as a greater problem since it is unacceptable in Islam both on a legal and on a traditional basis. Choosing spouse for women in particular is perceived as a major problem in the Muslim community since most of the population of boys in this country are non-Muslims. Thus, the risk that their daughters will marry non-Muslims is seen as a greater risk for daughters than for sons. The problem, for Muslims, becomes greater for the second generation female who is born and raised in Canadian society, because she is more likely than a first generation woman to find a non-Muslim husband from non-Islamic society. While parents may attempt to avoid this problem by reminding their daughters that this practice is haram, however, this warning may not succeed because there is no law in this country

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Abdo Elkholy Abdo. "Religion and Assimilation In Two Muslim Communities In America." Ph.D. Diss. Princeton University, 1960, p. 111.

⁷

The People of the Book referred to in the Qur'an are the Christians and the Jews.

which prohibits mixed marriages. Once again, here is a case where Canadian laws contradict openly with those of the Shari'ah.

Within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. research sample, the respondent's feelings about mixed marriage were evaluated in two ways. The first way, looked at mixed marriage along with ten other problems. The second, looked at mixed marriage within the context of dating. How mixed marriage is rated according to seriousness in comparison with three other problems by respondents is shown in Figure #15. Out of 152 subjects, 123 (88.8%) informants of the research sample responded to the question concerning marrying non-Muslims, while 29 persons (19.0%) did not respond. Approximately 45% of the 123 respondents reported that marrying non-Muslims was a serious problem for Canadian Muslims, 46 (33%) reported no problem, while 29 (22%) gave a moderate rating.

The overwhelming majority (80.9%) of respondents who reported a "high" level of religious observance considered mixed marriage as a "serious problem" or a "moderate" one. This contrasts with the fact that half of those who reported a "poor" level of observance (6.8%) selected "no problem" for this category (see Table #4).

TABLE: 4 Distribution of Mixed Marriage by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Serious problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	10		7	3	1	21 20.4
Average	14	10	12	8	9	53 51.5
Fair	6	1	3	3	9	22 21.4
Poor	3		1	1	2	7 6.8
	33	11	23	15	21	103
Total	32.0	10.7	22.3	14.6	20.4	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 49						

In the context of dating, the following question was asked of respondents: "As a Muslim, do you accept that your children date non-Muslims?" If the answer was "no" to the question, respondents were then asked to select a reason from 6 different categories. Out of 152 respondents, 110 (72.4%) answered the question, while 42 (27.6%) did not respond. Out of 110, 14 (12.7%) individuals said yes to the question. 96 (87.2%) said no to the question, and their response was accompanied with one or more selections from the 6 different categories. Almost two-thirds selected "It is against our Islamic values and faith" as the reason for not accepting their children dating non-Muslims, while one quarter selected "It is traditionally unacceptable in our culture" as their reason. Only 8 (8.3%) chose "I fear they will catch sexually transmitted diseases." Similarly another 8

(8.3%) selected "It is okay for boys but not for girls" as a reason qualifying their response. "I would like them to marry a Muslim and to have Muslim children" was not selected by any respondents who answered no to the question. No respondents used the "other" category to specify a reason not listed.

Bank Interest

Receiving interest (**Riba**) from the bank is common in the lives of many Canadians. Although interest may be enjoyed by many Canadians, it is considered haram for Muslims in Canada and elsewhere. The Shari'ah recommends sharply that Muslims avoid accepting bank interest. The Qur'an states:

Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the evil one by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury," but God hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord, desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for God to judge; but those who repeat the offence are companions of the fire: they will abide therein (for ever). (Qur'an 2: 275)

Regardless of their religious commitment some Muslims accept interest whether they are in Canada or in their former country. They might use different interpretations and justifications to manipulate the Islamic law in a way that profits their economic status. Some Muslims who accept bank interest give it away as charity, while others accept an amount of interest equivalent to the current rate of inflation and give the remainder away as charity. Since it is not feasible to keep all income at home, many of these possibilities are quite understandable and easy to follow. However, even when variations occur, one

must not forget that bank interest is prohibited in Islam since its economical system was based on Bait-Almal (an Arabic term used in the early Islamic period to refer to the finance department in Islamic state).

In order to discuss some of the ways Muslims in Canada view bank interest, an interview was conducted with Dr. Alauddin Ahmad⁸, an active member of the Ottawa Muslim Association:

Q. Perhaps the primary source of interest in this country stems from the banking system. Since banks have become one of the basic needs in this country, how do Muslims deal with them?

A. You are right. Banks are becoming very important institutions in our lives. We do not resist from using them at least to pay our bills or cash our [paycheques]. Nevertheless, we have some flexibility when it comes to interest problems. Today, banks offer a variety of accounts - some of them interest earning, others without interest. I can tell you about myself. I use a chequing account which pays no interest though they charge me few dollars a month for their services. Besides, most banks have deposit boxes you could rent and have your own key so that your money does not help them make interest on it.

Q. Suppose you open a savings account and you earn some interest on it at the end of the year, what will you do with that money?

A. I will give the money to the needy, though I do not expect a reward for it since that money is not the halal one I earned. Allah commands us to give from what we like or love, not from what our soul does not prefer for herself. Therefore, I do not expect it to be a Sadaqa (charity).

Q. If you do not accept interest as a return on your money, which the bank benefited from, what means do Muslims have in inflationary years?

A. This is an argument used in favour of receiving interest. "in this situation, you are not getting any money but you are covering the effect of inflation," people say.

8

Dr. Alauddin Ahmad is originally from India. He immigrated to Canada in 1964. Currently he is the advisor of Industrial Technology at the National Research Council with the Federal government.

Q. What is your opinion on buying a house on mortgage?

A. Whether you buy a house or rent one, you are paying an interest. As you know most of the houses and buildings which we rent are financed by the banks. So, when you pay your monthly rent, you are helping the borrower pay off his loans including interest. Then what difference does it make whether you help someone pay off his interest or you pay the interest for what you borrowed for yourself. To answer your question, I think, a house is one of the basic needs you have to satisfy in order to live. Hence, if you buy a house, which is just enough for your family through mortgage, I believe, the difficulty which you face in this country will make [it] acceptable for you. Though, you must work hard to pay off the debt as soon as possible by sacrificing some other needs. There are alternative to this like Housing Co-op.

Q. As you know, almost all of the business corporations are financed by financial institutions which in return charge specified interest rates. Where should Muslims invest their excess money, if they do not want to deposit it in an interest earning account?

A. The best solution I can think of is to organize some kind of an Islamic investment firm where everyone can contribute the extra money they have and share both the benefit and the risk. The Islamic housing corporation of Toronto is one of the Islamic Institutions that should be imitated. Until we can establish a similar company, we can invest in Bell Canada, Ontario Hydro and the like legitimate businesses.

Finally, I encourage Muslims to put their money together and start some kind of business instead of swimming in a confusion. Banks should be used only for the purpose of paying bills and the like while Muslims' money is deposited in a business venture which pays better returns than banks and clears the mind from any doubt.

According to Mr. Ahmad, members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. are facing a possible problem regarding whether they should accept bank interest or not. Some community members do not accept bank interest, but instead, invest their money in an Islamic bank or organizations in Canada, such as the Islamic Trust Foundation in Canada.

The subjects of the research sample were asked to evaluate bank interest as a

problem. Out of 152 respondents, 138 (90.7%) responses were obtained, while 14 (9.2%) did not respond. Figure #15 shows that one-third of the 138 respondents reported that they considered accepting bank interest as a serious problem for Canadian Muslims. Just over half (55.7%) reported no problem with accepting bank interest, while the remaining (11.5%) gave a moderate rating to the category.

Although more than half (55.7%) of the sample population reported no problem with the matter of bank interest, there is still significant number of the research sample (32.6%) who do consider this as a serious problem.

Premarital Sex

Another problem facing the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. is premarital sex. In Canada, premarital sex is not illegal, and it is also reported to occur at high frequencies among adolescents. A recent study conducted by Queen's University¹ researchers discovered that 76% of grade 11 students (15, 16 years old) surveyed said that "it is alright for two people to have sex before marriage if they are in love" (p. 77). The researchers concluded from other data that, "one-half felt that loveless sex is satisfying, and approximately one-fifth of them ... would take sexual pleasure wherever they could find it" (p. 77).

Part of the education system (health program) in this country is geared on sex. As with drinking alcohol, premarital sex is seen as another source of problems and confusion among Muslims who live in a non-Islamic society. Many Muslims regard sex education in the schools as problematic because they feel that in many cases, sex education may promote sexual promiscuity among their children. Nevertheless, parental anxiety about sexual promiscuity is reflected in 8 (8%) respondents' selection of sexually transmitted diseases as a justification for opposing their children dating non-Muslims.

Sex outside marriage, or **zina** (refers to both adultery and fornication) is considered haram (forbidden) in Islam, even though it is legally and often morally

¹

A.J.C. King, et.al. Canada Youth and AIDS Study (NHRDP). Kingston, Ontario: Health and Welfare Canada, 1989.

acceptable in Canadian society. This difference between Islamic and Canadian law is particularly noticeable in terms of the value and the level of punishment accorded to adultery and fornication. According to Islamic law, zina refers to any sexual intercourse witnessed by four believers, whether before or after marriage with a person other than one's spouse. Within the Canadian context, adultery defined by the Oxford Dictionary as the "voluntary sexual intercourse of married persons with one of the opposite sex other than his or her spouse ..." is one of the legal grounds for divorce.

While there is no penalty for pre-marital sex or fornication within the Canadian legal system, the Islamic Shari'ah considers fornication as an act of sin and immorality.

Flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God, if ye believe in God and the Last Day: And let a party of the believers witness their punishment. Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an unbeliever: Nor let any but such a man or an unbeliever marry such a woman: To the believers such a thing is forbidden. (Qur'an 24:2-3)

The conflict arising from these two different perceptions of sex before marriage may have a negative impact on an individual's Islamic identity. An important question arising from this conflict is how do Muslim parents combat adolescent peer pressure and explain to their children, that although premarital sex is legal in Canada, it is not legal according to the Shari'ah?

The meaning of adultery and premarital sex (fornication) may become an important issue for Muslim parents. They may be convinced that the way their adolescent children cope with these problems will play a major role in shaping the outcome of a distinctly Islamic identity. The problem can be seen as a greater one for the second generation Muslims whose Canadian values may interfere with an original series of values from a

former generation of immigrant parents.

The research sample responded to the category "having sex before marriage" with considerable ambivalence. Figure #16 shows that 134 (88.1%) of 152 respondents of the research sample answered this question, while 18 (11.8%) did not report. Of the 134 respondents, slightly less than half (45.5%) rated premarital sex as a "serious problem," just over one third (37.3%) reported "no problem", while the remaining 17.1% of respondents gave a moderate rating.

Celebrate Christmas

A problem which appears to affect the children within the Muslim community is whether or not to celebrate Christmas. There may be some variation between how this problem is experienced between first and second generation Muslims. It is very difficult to ignore Christmas due to the great publicity which Christmas is given in Canadian society. Islamic educational institutions educate their students and inform them about the historical background behind Christmas and why they, as Muslims, do not celebrate this particular day. Children also have been reminded that they too have special days which are celebrated in their religion. Children, however, do not always see Christmas as a religious celebration. Rather they see it as a feast and a time in which they receive presents. The strong influence of media has contributed to this perception. Muslim parents tell their children that instead of getting presents on Christmas, they will receive

presents on an Islamic holidays, like Id. Since Id comes twice each year, according to the Islamic calendar, children often prefer this compromise, because they may receive presents twice, instead of once.

Figure #16 indicates that Christmas, compared with other problems, might not need to be considered an essential problem facing the Muslim sample in the C.N.C.R. in relation to their experience in Canada. Out of 152 Muslims of the research sample 139 (91.4) responded to the Christmas category, and indicated the seriousness of Christmas as a possible problem, while 13 did not respond (8.5%). More than half (57.5%) of the 139 respondents reported that they did not experience problems around the celebration of Christmas. Slightly less than one-third (29.4%) considered this event a serious problem, while the remaining 18 (12.9%) respondents gave a moderate rating. The majority of the research sample (57.5%) may not consider Christmas a serious problem. This may be due, in part, to its legal status within the Islamic law. Yet, Christmas may present a problem for others. Because of its affiliation with Christianity, Christmas may be viewed as a non-Islamic social value for the Muslim community in Canada.

With respect to their level of religious observances in correlation with Christmas (as demonstrated in Table #5), more than one-half (56%) of those who reported a "high" or "average" level of religious observance considered Christmas to be "no problem" as a social value, while a similar percentage (56.6%) of those who reported "fair" or "poor" level of observance designated the same answer.

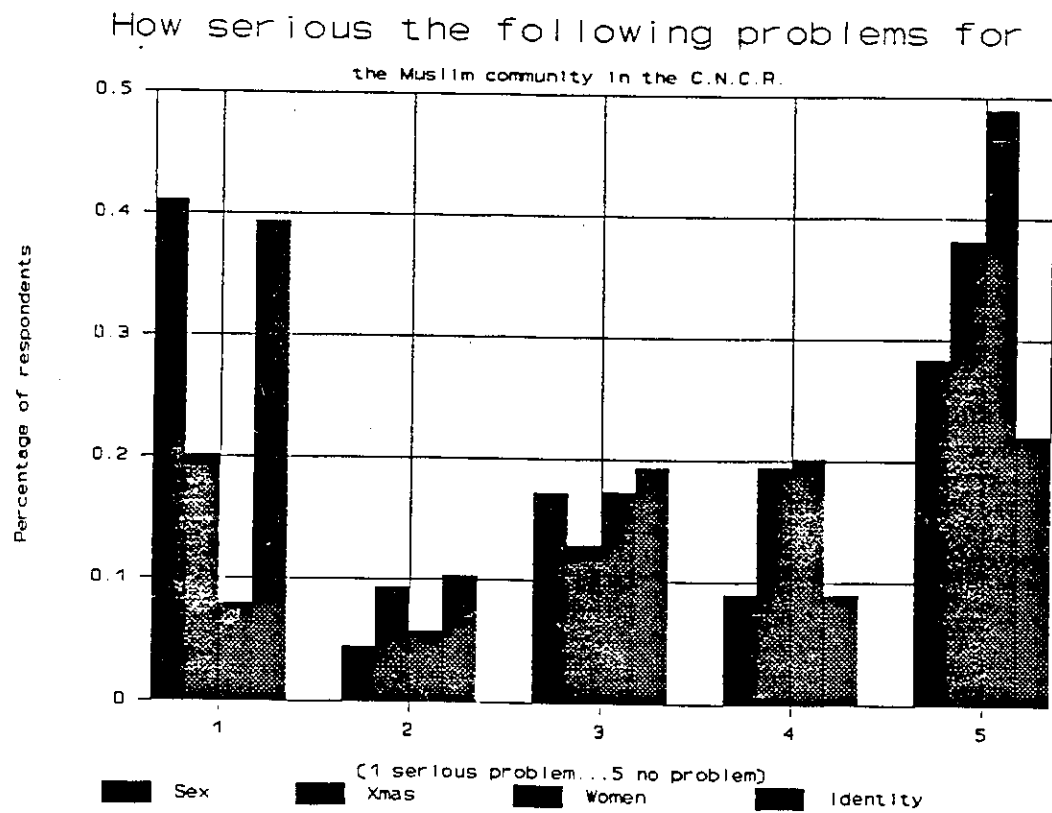


Figure 16

TABLE: 5 Distribution of Christmas by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Series problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	5	2	4	3	7	21 20.0
Average	13	6	3	11	21	54 51.4
Fair	3	2	5	2	11	23 21.9
Poor	1	1	1	2	2	7 6.7
	22	11	13	18	41	105
Total	21.0	10.5	12.4	17.1	39.0	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 47						

Women Working Outside the House

Problems facing Muslims in a non-Muslim community do not always have to revolve around the children. There are many real problems which affect the adult population as well. One problem is whether or not women should work outside of the home.

The subject of women in Islam has generated vast literature, and yet, it is extremely difficult to discover what in fact is Islam's impact on women. Culture may play a major role with regard to the status of women in Islam, but which aspects, in particular, influence identity?

Muslim scholars declare that Islam gives a status to women that is generally unsurpassed in other cultures and religions. Many also state that Islam has improved the condition of women, since Islam banned the **Jahilah** (pre-Islamic period) practice of female infanticide, gave women the right to inherit property and limited men to four wives. They further wrote that during the pre-Islamic period, women were not permitted to inherit property.

A further investigation of the condition of women during the pre-Islamic period of Arabia shows that Muhammad's wife, Khatija, was financially independent. Frequently, the perception of women in Islam from a non-Islamic perspective might be different. A Muslim woman, in the eye of a Canadian, for instance, may be regarded as someone who is unable to enjoy the same rights of freedom and equality as other non-Muslim Canadian females. Nevertheless, "The rights of women are in Islam ... it is only a case of [women] knowing and exercising these rights."²

With respect to the Shari'ah, women may work outside of the house in order to participate in shaping the society, as well as give herself a sense of equality and pride. In a book by Jean Paul Charnay, it is shown that at the time when paganism ruled the Arabic world in the pre-Islamic era, women were seen as insignificant and unimportant. According to Charnay, this evolved to a point where "some doctors have even wondered

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Excerpt from interview with Mrs. Khatija Haffajee, February 10, 1988. Mrs. Haffajee immigrated from South Africa, 25 years ago, and currently she is teaching with Carleton Board of Education.

whether woman could enter paradise."³

However, Prophet Muhammad spoke of women's as well as men's rights and responsibilities in the context of their faith and society. He did not say that women were inferior, but stated that they were different than men. The basis of this difference is a matter of considerable scholarly interest. Muhammad did not say that women could not work outside of the home. In contrast, he encouraged woman to participate in building a healthy Islamic society. The Islamic law and traditions did not treat the issue of women working outside the house as a legal violation, but some Muslim scholars have their own interpretations and observations on the issue. These scholars object to women working outside of the house.

From an Islamic legal perspective, women working outside of the house is not considered haram. On the contrary, during modern periods of recession, economic inflation and high taxation, women working outside the house may even be necessary and not an option. Indeed, women working outside the house does not contradict any aspect of the Shari'ah.

The issue of women and the right to work outside of the house becomes debatable and significant in many cultures. The research addresses this issue in order to see whether it is viewed as important by respondents in the sample.

According to the research sample of members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., the level of seriousness attributed to the problem of Muslim women working

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J.P. Charnay. Islamic Culture and Socio-Economic Change. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1971, p. 60.

outside of the house is shown in Figure #16. Out of the total sample (152), 139 (91.4%) informants responded to the category, while 13 (8.5%) respondents did not respond. Out of 139 respondents, more than two-thirds (69.0%) reported no problem with regard to Muslim women working outside of the house, 19 (13.6%) persons reported serious problems with this category, and less than one-fifth (17.2%) gave a moderate rating.

The research seems to indicate that a correlation may exist between the level of seriousness attributed by respondents to Muslim women working outside of the house and the fact that Islamic law (Shari'ah) does not oppose this fact. Some similarities may be perceived to exist between the Canadian law and the Islamic law concerning women working outside of the house. Due to this perceived similarity, women working outside of the house might be more easily resolved than other problems for which no similarity can be perceived. Indeed, this issue is rated lowest by respondents in levels of seriousness among the other problems.

Losing Identity and Faith

Islamic identity and its maintenance within the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. has been discussed in the previous chapter. Now, from their own experience, how seriously is the possibility of losing Islamic identity perceived? In the context of this perceived possibility, how, on the other hand, do members of the research sample rate their acceptance by Canadians? These two questions are related

and revolve around the issue of identity for Muslims.

From the total sample of 152 respondents, 145 (95.3%) persons responded to the category "losing identity and faith." The inclusion of the term "faith" was meant to convey, along with identity in general, a sense of "religious belonging." Figure #16 shows the response of the sample to this category. Approximately half of the research sample who lived in the National Capital Region considered losing their Islamic identity and faith as a serious problem. Just less than one-third (31.0%) reported no problem, while the remaining one-fifth gave a moderate rating to the problem.

The majority of respondents who reported high, average, or fair level of their religious observance rated losing their identity and faith as a "serious problem" facing Canadian Muslims (see Table #6), while the majority of those who reported a "poor" level of religious observance rated "losing identity and faith" as being "no problem."

TABLE: 6 Distribution of Islamic Identity by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Serious problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	8	2	7	1	4	22 20.0
Average	24	5	14	3	11	57 51.8
Fair	9	3	2	5	5	24 21.8
Poor	2		1	1	3	7 6.4
	43	10	24	10	23	110
Total	39.1	9.1	21.8	9.1	20.9	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 42						

When asked to rate their acceptance by Canadians, 144 (94.7%) members of the research sample responded, while 8 (5.2%) did not respond. Less than one-fifth (15.2%) respondents reported a serious problem with being accepted by Canadians. Approximately two-thirds reported no problem being accepted, while the remaining one-fifth rated a moderate seriousness to their acceptance by Canadians. Apparently, a correlation exists between fear of "losing identity and faith" and "being accepted by Canadians." This correlation may lead to the interpretation that because of their widespread perception of acceptance by Canadians, a high percentage of Muslims responding in the research sample (49.6%) feared losing their identity and faith. Is it possible, instead, that a perceived acceptance by Canadians and a perceived loss of

identity and faith go hand in hand? Perceived acceptance by Canadians must also be regarded in conjunction with the discrimination and racism experienced by Muslims in the research sample (see below).

Certainly a perception of discrimination and racism by a majority of informants would categorically exclude a perception of acceptance by these same informants. Only 53 (37.8%) out of the 140 respondents answering the question regarding discrimination and racism reported "serious problem" with this issue. Around one-third reported "no problem," while the remaining 30% reported a moderate problem with discrimination and racism in Canada. Although more than two-thirds of respondents within the research sample said that they perceived few problems being accepted by Canadians, almost an equal percentage (62.8%) of subjects reported some degree of difficulty with discrimination and racism.

The Canadian Media

Many problems, and certainly the ones dealt with previously are seen to be exacerbated by the media. The media, including television, film, modern fiction, comic books, newspapers and radio, play a great role in how people look at many social aspects of life. For many Muslims, the media is seen as promoting premarital sex and drinking as behaviours that are fun and further, one may be led to eventually believing that there is nothing wrong with these activities. One such example is the promotional

advertising on television used by beer companies. For a Muslim, these commercials are perceived to lead the younger generation to believe that no matter what they are doing, they would have more fun if they had a beer.

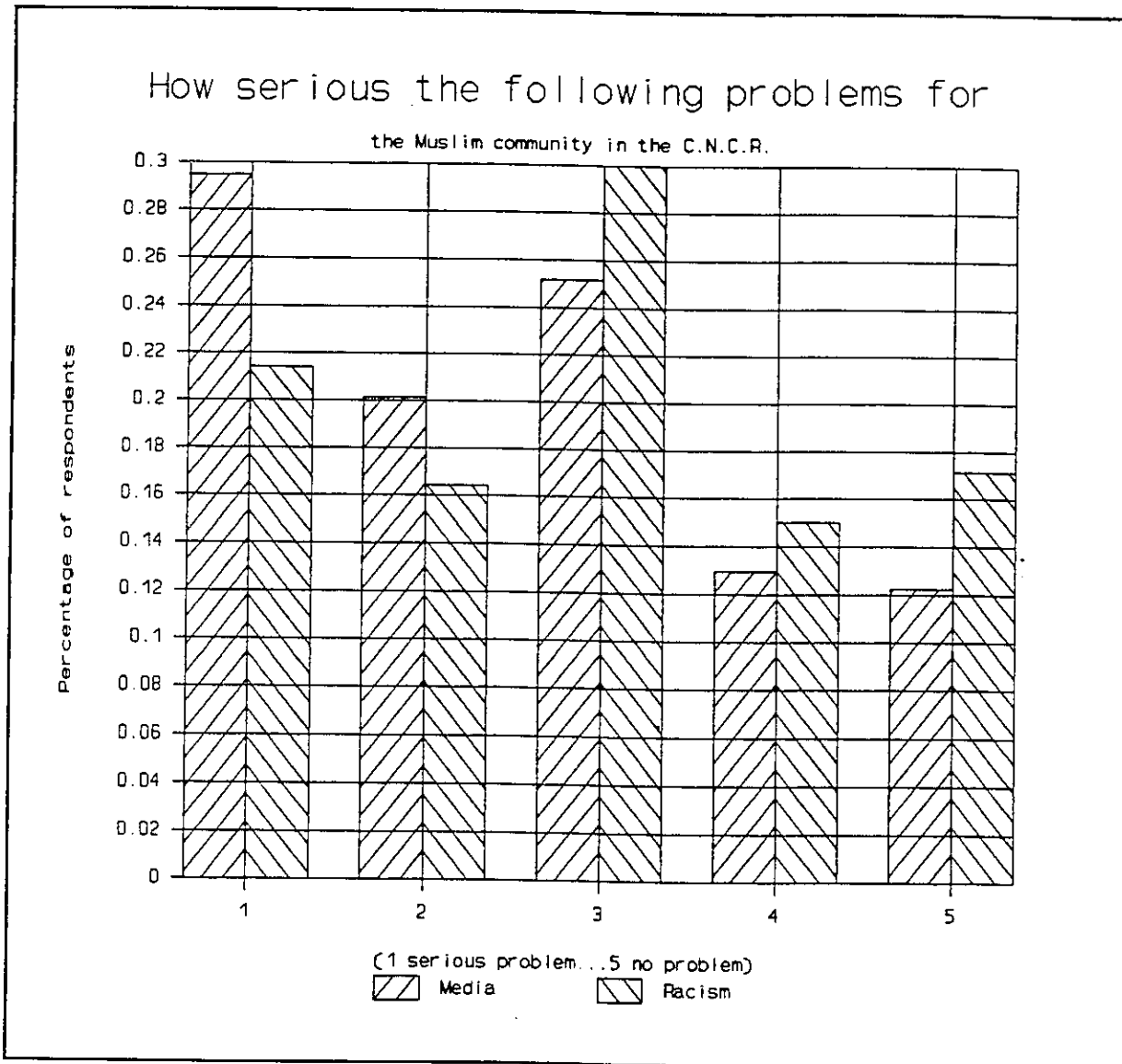


Figure 17

Premarital sex is also portrayed frequently on television and in movies. The casual approach to sex in the entertainment industry is seen, by Muslims, as providing

adolescents with the impression that premarital sex is an intrinsic and necessary part of cultural belonging. All trivializing approaches to premarital sex are seen by Muslims as problems facing their adolescent children, (and may be seen as greater problems for Canadian-born Muslims) since the values portrayed in film around premarital sex are unacceptable in Islamic traditions (as previously discussed).

The media may also convey a negative image of Muslims and Islamic values. The Ottawa Citizen for example, once called the Afghans who oppose their communist government "Mugahideen," an Arabic word which means persons who fight for their freedom and rights. The day after, in the same newspaper, a large front-page headline used the word rebels, conveying a negative connotation, instead of Mugahideen.

In a study conducted by Sheila McDonough⁴, on the Muslim community in Montreal:

The most serious problem Muslims suffer from in Canada is the negative stereotyping about Islam which is promoted through the Canadian media, and which is pervasive. Muslims may differ among themselves as to how conservative or liberal they might be on issues like the dress of women, or as the nature of their religious practice, but they all suffer greatly from this negative stereotyping. They all seek ways to combat it. It is the seriousness of this problem that distinguishes the Muslim experience from that of other ethnic groups.⁵

When the informants of the research sample were asked to indicate the seriousness of the possible problem of media in relation to their experience living in the

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Sheila McDonough is professor of Islam at Concordia University.

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Sheila McDonough. "Religion and Ethnicity among the Muslims of Montreal." paper presented at the Learned Societies Conference, Victoria: British Columbia, 1990, p. 6.

C.N.C.R., the majority of the Muslim community said it was a serious problem. 139 (91.4%) responses were obtained out of the 152 informants, while 13 (8.5%) did not report. Figure #17 shows about half of the 139 respondents reported that, from their own experience as Canadian Muslims, they considered the media as a serious problem, while one-quarter reported no problem with the media. The remaining one-quarter gave a moderate rating to the category.

Although respondents of the research sample differed in their level of religious observance, the majority regarded Canadian media as a "serious problem". Respondents who rated an "average" level of observance ranked media as the most serious problem ranked the highest (see Table #7). Interestingly those respondents who reported a "high" level of religious observance were equally divided in terms of their ranking to level of seriousness within the media category. As demonstrated in Table #7, 8 (36.3%) persons reported serious problem, 7 (31.8%) individuals considered the Canadian media as no problem, and 7 (31.8%) subjects gave a moderate answer.

TABLE: 7 Distribution of the Media by Religious Observance

Relig. Obser.	Serious problem.....No problem					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
High	4	4	7	3	4	22 21.2
Average	23	11	13	4	3	54 51.9
Fair	6	7	2	2	5	22 21.2
Poor	3	1	1	1		6 5.8
	36	23	23	10	12	104
Total	34.6	22.1	22.1	9.6	11.5	100.0
Number of Missing Observations: 48						

Discrimination and Racism

Another important problem the Muslim community might face is that of discrimination and racism. Lack of information and general misconceptions about Islamic faith and its values might be two factors which lead to discrimination and racism.

The problem of discrimination and racism might be compounded by the media in its coverage of events in the Middle East, such as the recent coverage of the Gulf War. As the publicity arising out of the Gulf Crisis demonstrates, many other factors come to bear on the ways Middle Eastern culture is perceived throughout the world generally, and

by Canadians in particular. Any discrimination and racism arising as a result of this coverage can not be traced only to religious differences, but also to differences in culture, skin color, language and nationality. Indeed, the perception of considerable "difference" between Canadian culture and Middle Eastern culture may influence the process of adaptation for Muslims immigrating to Canada. Discrimination may be further compounded when members of this community attempt to preserve their cultural values, including their language and customs after immigrating to Canada. Cultural difference is thereby made even more remarkable. Breton states:

Members of minority groups are more likely to encounter discrimination if they keep their customs and ability to speak their language ... more likely if members of minority groups speak with an accent than if they do not.⁶

The Muslim child or adult may experience discrimination and racism because of the perception of difference which occurs within Canadian society generally. This perception of difference may include an assumption that difference is equivalent to inferiority. This begins what psychologists call a self-fulfilling prophecy. As the Muslim becomes gradually more aware of the perception of difference, which includes the assumption that he/she is inferior, he/she may actually begin to believe that his/her difference truly is a basis for inferiority. As a result, an attitude of inferiority may develop for the individual.

Members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. reported that the Canadian government is working to abolish discrimination with its multiculturalism program. In

6

Raymon Breton. "The Ethnic Community as a Resource in Relation to Group Problems: Perceptions and attitudes." Research paper #122, Dept. of Sociology, University of Toronto, 1981, p. 19.

1971, for instance, the Prime Minister of Canada made a statement to the House of Commons:

The policy I am announcing today accepts the contention of the other cultural communities that they, too, are essential elements in Canada and deserve government assistance in order to contribute to regional and national life in ways that derive from their heritage yet are distinctively Canadian.⁷

In Canada, everyone regardless of ethnic background, is allowed to maintain their own values and distinct way of life. In fact, many Muslims choose to come to Canada because of this very reason.

Figure #17 shows levels of discrimination and racism reported by respondents from the research sample. 140 (92.1%) out of 152 informants of the research sample responded to the question of discrimination and racism, while 12 respondents (7.8%) did not report. Slightly over one-third (37.8%) respondents reported that they considered discrimination and racism a "serious problem" for Canadian Muslims, another third reported "no problem", while just under one-third gave a moderate rating.

Due to the psychological distress which occurs for individuals around the problem of discrimination and racism, a sub-index was generated in the questionnaire in an effort to capture some aspects of distress experienced by respondents.

The following question was posed: Have you experienced any psychological or social problems in this country because of your faith? The findings show that out of 152 informants, less than one-quarter (23.1%) reported yes, while the remaining three-quarters¹ gave a negative response. One person (0.6%) did not respond. A sub-index

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"The Proceedings of the House of Commons of Canada." 1971, p. 8545-46.

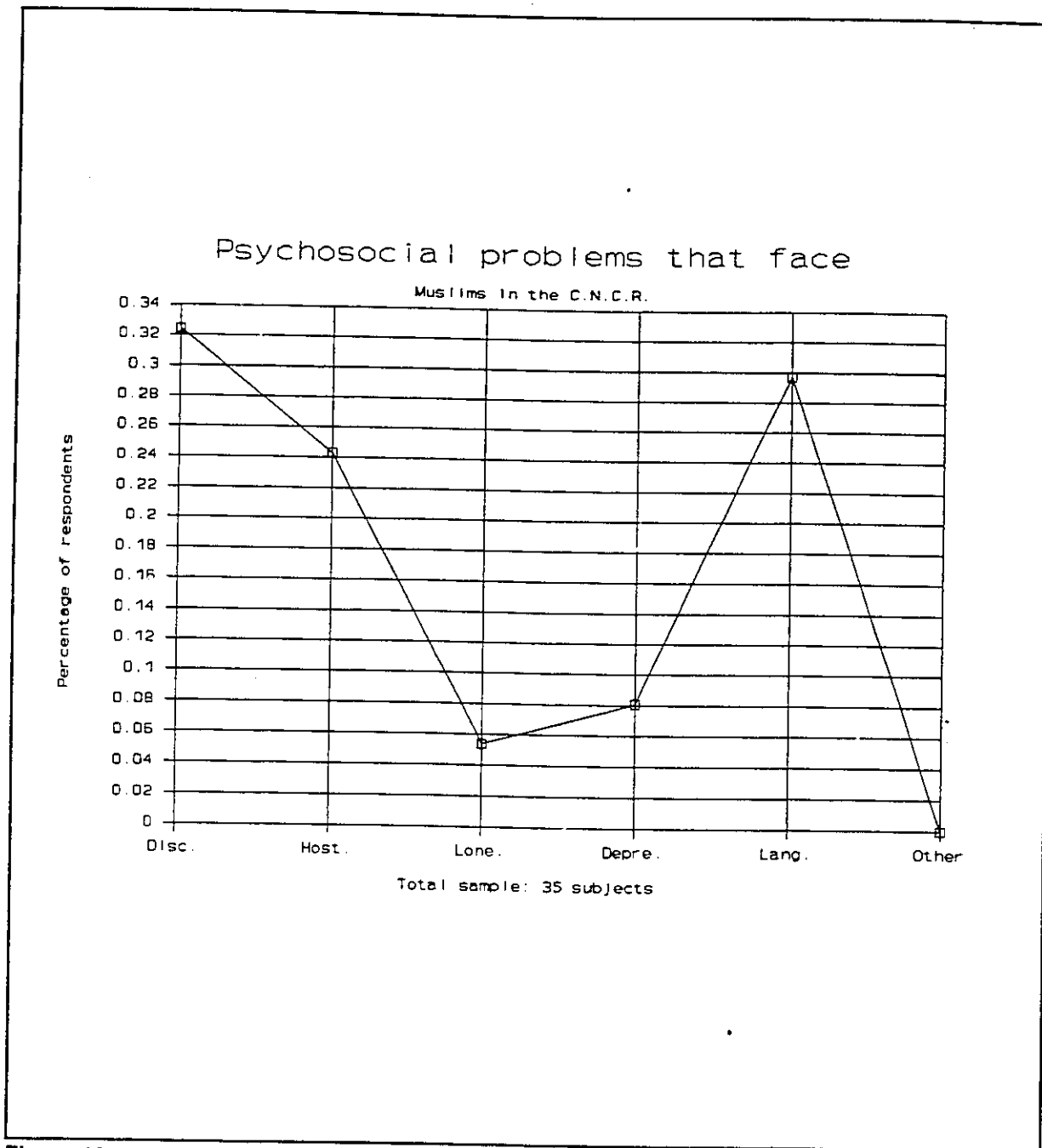


Figure 18

(for the 35 persons) was generated using the following categories: discrimination and racism, hostility (because I am Muslim), loneliness and isolation, depression and stress, language problems, and other (specify). The findings are illustrated in Figure #18.

For the 35 subjects in the research sample who reported that they did experience psychological or social problems because of their faith, one-third stated the problem manifested as discrimination and racism, one-quarter reported hostility, 2 (5.4%) reported loneliness and isolation, 3 (8.1%) reported depression and stress, and 11 (29.7%) reported language problems. The "other" category did not generate any responses. 4 respondents selected 2 categories and 4 respondents selected 3 problems.

For the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., adjustment to a non-Islamic society is sometimes seen as a difficult process. Nevertheless,

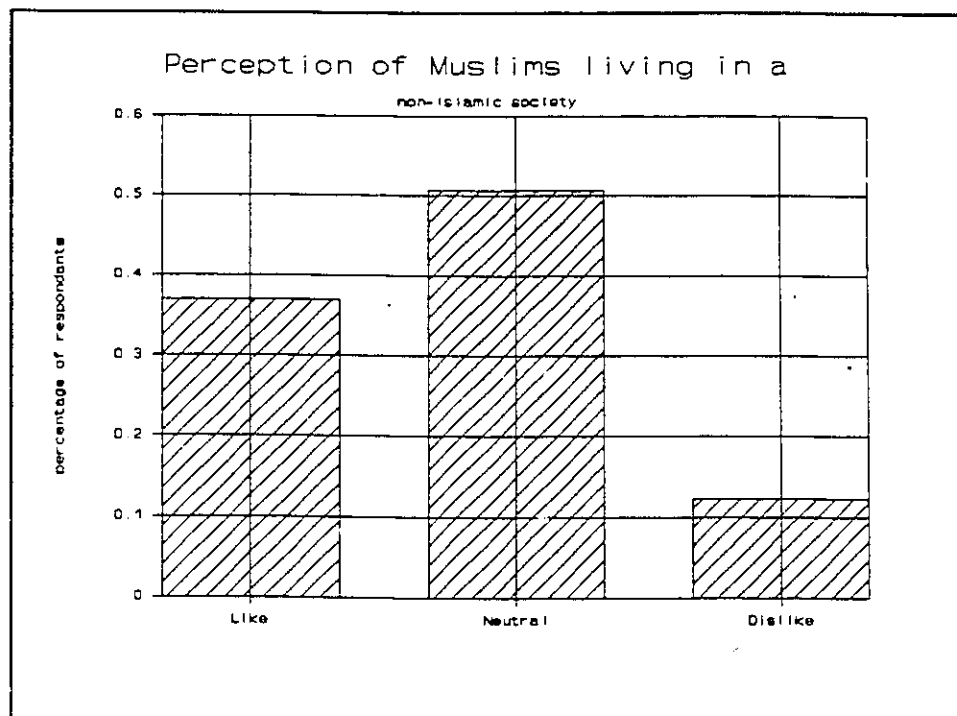


Figure 19

many Muslims report living in this society without many difficulties. An important question was addressed in the research: In general, how do you feel about this society (non-Islamic society)? Do you like or dislike it as a place to live? Figure #19 shows the research results of this question based upon the responses generated by the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. Coupled with the category "being

accepted by Canadians" which did not demonstrate a significant level of serious concern for members of the sample, we can conclude that Muslims polled in the research both like this community and feel accepted by it.

Conclusion: An Approach to Islamic Identity

The concept of identity was at the centre of the work of psychologist Erik Erikson. Erikson defined identity as one of the goals of the developmental process for human beings. Identity, for Erikson, was a question that had to be resolved during an individual's adolescence. This is a time of consolidation, "in which the person must form a self-image that makes sense and provides both a continuity with the past and an orientation toward the future."⁸ Erikson described identity this way:

At one time, then, it will appear to refer to a conscious sense of individual identity; at another to an unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character; at a third, as a criterion for the silent doings of ego synthesis; and finally as a maintenance for an inner solidarity with a group's ideals and identity.⁹

Integration relates to the levels of security, autonomy and well-being achieved by individuals throughout the course of their development. For Erikson, identity appears to

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Erik Erikson (4th Ed.). in A History of Modern Psychology. D.P. Schultz & S.E. Schultz. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987, p. 348.

⁹

Erik Erikson. in The Harvard Guide to Modern Psychiatry. Armand M. Nicholi, Jr. ed. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1978, p. 134.

have two frames of reference: an internal and an external frame. Internally, identity relates to the sense of integration achieved by the self. Externally, identity relates to aspects of the social and cultural world in which the individual achieves acceptance, and which, for this reason, becomes a functional part of the individual's social and cultural reality (see chapter #1, p. 31-32).¹⁰

Two important questions arise with respect to the level of seriousness attributed by respondents to each of the ten problems generated in the research model. Further, the question of identity for these individuals arises. Indeed, these two questions provide a significant approach to the issue of Islamic identity, although this approach may be necessarily paradoxical in nature:

1. Is it possible that respondents who attributed a low level of seriousness to the various categories and selected "no problem" with a particular category possess a high level of identity with Islam? Does the absence of seriousness surrounding one or more of the problems imply that: a strong sense of security exists for the individual, and for this reason problems are not encountered as serious. Does this mean that the individual is not "threatened" by a potential modification of his way of life by the host culture? A high level of Islamic identity would certainly involve a strong sense of security and autonomy and well-being for individuals, and this sense would incorporate the following:

- individuals are very committed to the teaching and values of Islam;
- individuals are very observant of the rituals, practices and law of Islam;

¹⁰

Ibid., p. 134

- individuals regard Islam as a way of life, an orientation guiding everyday behaviours and activities; and,
- individuals achieve a high level of faith and belief in Islam which relates directly to both their level of commitment and their level of observance, and these, in turn, contribute to their sense of Islamic identity.

Islamic identity, considered in this way, can be seen as having an impact on the self in the context of the family, community and society in which the individual is situated. In other words, the individual with a high level of Islamic identity is comfortable and secure in social and familial contexts. In part due to strong levels of commitment, observance and religious faith, these individuals achieve a sense of well-being and autonomy which promotes their cultural difference within Canadian society. Once well-being, security and autonomy are achieved, a sense of identity is reinforced and preserved for Muslims in Canada. For these individuals, tension is not likely to occur between the non-Islamic values of Canadian society and the Islamic values of the community, family and the self. Indeed, their sense of self, with respect to family, community and society is sufficiently durable to withstand the perception of differences occurring within Canadian society. We may not, however, conclude that these individuals do not experience discrimination and racism¹¹, regardless of the levels of acceptance they report or how much they report "liking" the community in which they live. To the contrary, both levels of acceptance and levels of discrimination and racism reported are high, and the conclusion from these

¹¹

The definition of social identity and its three aspects, particularly "from without," which has been mentioned in chapter #1 can be utilized in this context.

findings would be: While Muslims living in the National Capital Region say they are accepted, a qualifier is attached to this acceptance: acceptance is accompanied with discrimination and racism, and not always tolerance.

Paradoxically, however, some individuals who reported "no problem" with the ten categories may possess a sense of security, autonomy and well-being, and yet not have a high level of Islamic identity. Indeed, identity would be achieved with a sense of autonomy existing for the individual which separates an Islamic way of life from a Canadian way of life, in general. For these individuals the separation between the two may not have occurred or may not be sustained in everyday life. Accompanying the achievement of identity which separates one from the other is an awareness of the "differences" existing between the Islamic way of life and the Canadian way of life. If an awareness of difference is neither desirable nor upheld for the individual, then certainly those attributes which characterize and distinguish the Muslim from the non-Muslim would not be clear for the individual. Perhaps, for this individual, these differential attributes are "left behind" in favor of "trying not to be seen as different" by Canadian society. Security, autonomy, well-being, and inevitably Islamic identity are at risk of modification for these individuals. For these individuals, low levels of seriousness are attributed to the categories. This finding may be interpreted to mean that some individuals experience few problems with respect to the ten categories precisely because their commitment and level of observance is inconsequential or precarious. Thus, for this group, a sense of Islamic identity, considered in the way outlined above, cannot be seen to be high, nor will it impact on them personally, with respect to the preservation and reinforcement of their

autonomy and security and well-being, nor in the context of the family, community and society in which they are situated. For these individuals little tension can be seen to occur around non-Islamic values of Canadian society because the absence of autonomy results, directly or indirectly, from an accompanying erosion of those things which define their difference in the first place: Islamic values recede in favour of those values promulgated within the host culture, generally.

2. The amount of seriousness attributed to the various categories needs to be considered among all respondents. Which factors contribute to the overall high levels of seriousness attributed to the categories? Is it possible that respondents who attributed a high level of seriousness to a particular category also possess a low or weaker level of identity with Islam? Does the presence of seriousness imply that a low or weaker sense of security exists for the individual?

For these individuals a strong sense of security, autonomy and well being, founded on the basis of an Islamic identity, does not necessarily bolster them from the seriousness attributed to the variety of problems generated in the survey. This is not to suggest that no level of identity is ever achieved, but instead a form of identity which is less secure, less autonomous and more seldom resulting in well-being. Rather, this form of identity leads to conflict for the self and not to consolidation, based on Erikson's model. If security, autonomy and well-being are modulated by the level of identity achieved, a low or weaker level of Islamic identity defined in this way would incorporate the following:

- a) while individuals are very committed to the teaching and values of Islam, their commitment does not appear to reduce the number of problems they experience, nor the level of seriousness which they attribute to these problems;
- b) while individuals are very observant of the rituals, practices and laws of Islam, their observances do not appear to enhance their sense of security, autonomy and well-being, but a consciousness of the difference between Muslim and non-Muslim values may still be present which contributes to their distress, in particular, their perception of discrimination and racism;
- c) while individuals regard Islam as a way of life, an orientation guiding everyday behaviours and activities, this outlook contributes to the perception that non-Islamic values put them at higher risk of losing their identity;
- d) while individuals achieve a high level of faith and belief in Islam which may relate to both their level of commitment and their level of observance, this continuum may not seem to culminate in a strong, secure sense of Islamic identity for them. This becomes evident in the finding that a high seriousness rating to the ten categories, overall, probably suggests distress is present for individuals with respect to their security, autonomy and well-being: features, in fact, of an Islamic identity.

Because of their (face-value) strong attachment to Islam evidenced in the high levels of commitment and observance reported in the survey, this group of respondents still experiences high levels of seriousness around many problems. Implicit in this interpretation is the possibility that a sense of Islamic identity, involving a strong sense of security is not achieved by some individuals, and under some circumstances. High levels

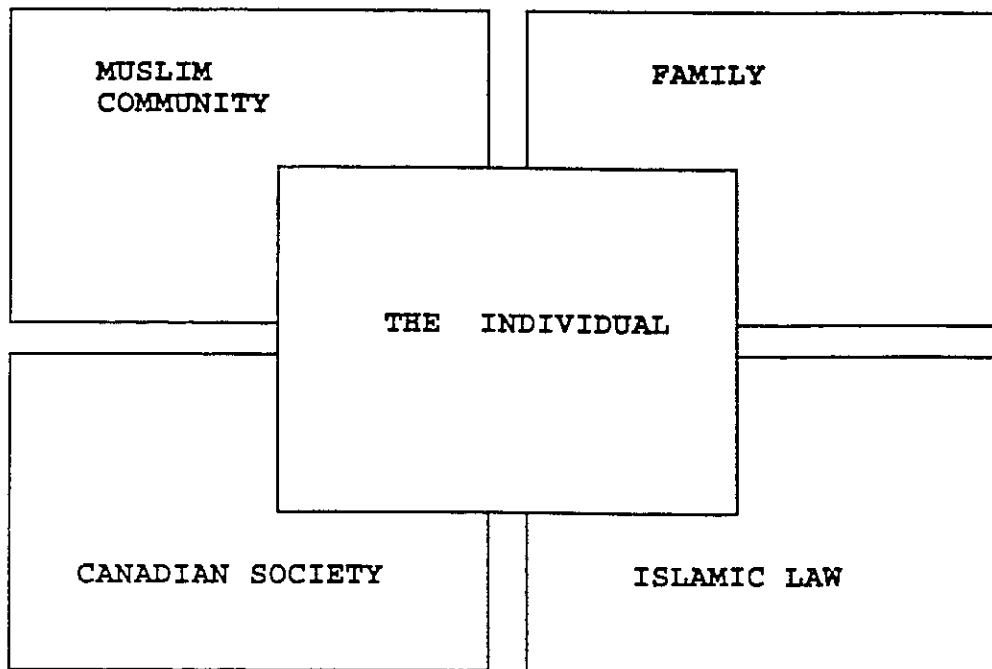
of seriousness are seldom attributed to the ten problem categories by individuals who rate their levels of observance, commitment and view of Islam as a way of life.

Ultimately, these findings and interpretations may imply that a correlation is likely to exist between the levels of seriousness attributed to the ten problems, and the level of Islamic identity achieved by the individual.

Generally, there appears to be four major forces which can be seen to affect the Islamic identity of a person: Islamic law, the family, the community and the society. Located at the centre, the individual is subject to these forces, and this investigation is concerned with the way these forces impact on the person, affecting individual identity (Erikson's internal frame of reference). This model is shown in the illustration, below.

TABLE: 8

FOUR FORCES AFFECTING ISLAMIC IDENTITY OF THE PERSON



With respect to its impact on the self, Islamic law can be seen as contributing to the identity of the person when the individual observes these laws, and when they are seen as contributing to a sense of personal control and strength. Also, when Islamic law is perceived to contribute to the security, autonomy and well-being of the individual, it must be taken into consideration in developing an understanding of Islamic identity. Sometimes, obedience to Islamic law may be viewed as a force which facilitates a strong sense of Islamic identity. Alternatively, a strong sense of Islamic identity may, for some individuals, and under some circumstances, result in the individual's achievement of security, autonomy and well-being by observance of Islamic law. In either case, Islamic

law plays a significant role in affecting an individual's Islamic identity.

The orientation of the family and its observance of the Islamic faith is possibly at the core of an individual's world. A strong sense of Islamic identity may also be a reflection of harmony and stability achieved in the home. Although the family can sometimes be the place where some of the ten problems arise, it can also provide a resource for individuals to resolve some of these problems. The family may function to nurture positive role models, provide a locus of security and well-being and also provide love, stability and comfort for individuals. Conversely, as we have seen, any modifications of familial harmony can be seen as important stressors for the individual, in particular, modifications which arise as a result of exchanging Islamic values for non-Islamic ones.

The Muslim community may also provide a source of strength and stability for the individual (Erikson's external frame of reference). Identification with the community might foster a sense of solidarity and bonding among members of the community. The preservation of activities, the availability of culture-specific resources (restaurants, educational institutions, places of worship) all function to nurture a sense of belonging for the Muslim in Canada. With a "place to belong" the Muslim in Canada may achieve a strong and significant sense of Islamic identity, based, in part, upon the security available in a community of supportive peers and friends, many of whom share similar experiences.

Some political measures are already being brought about in Canada to help the Muslim community. In part, Canadian society functions to nurture a place in which the Muslim community can flourish. According to Kassim Mahmud, former president of the Canadian Muslim Communities Council (CMCC), one of the biggest achievements toward

this end was the abolishment of the Lord's Prayer in the school system. This was a major breakthrough because now the schools are acknowledging not only one religion, but many, and in time they may even recognize all of the world's traditional religions that are represented in Canada.

Another added advantage for Muslims living in Canada is the Constitution. This guarantees the freedom of the individual in Canada no matter what race, creed or religion the person is. This allows the Muslims to stand up and fight for their rights as true Canadians. Muslims who have attained citizenship in Canada must always be recognized as Canadians.

Finally, a solution to some of the problems faced by the Muslims is put forward by Gibb. He defines a solution (which he calls an antitoxin) to the problems (or what he calls a virus) of the West. Gibb advises that:

"...the Muslim faith will have to show that it possesses the strength and vitality to generate these antitoxins, mainly out of its own resources, but not excluding the possibility of adapting some of the constrictive elements in Western thought..."¹²

This notion of accommodation seems to be generally accepted among the Muslims in the West. "One may accommodate but one should never compromise his/her beliefs, values, and ideals which shape the Islamic identity."¹³ When the resources of self,

¹²

H.A.R. Gibb. Modern Trends in Islam. New York: Octagon Books, 1972, p. 122.

¹³

Excerpt from interview with a member of the Muslim community in Ottawa who immigrated to Canada in 1957 and spent three years in Ottawa. He has moved with his family to different cities in Ontario, finally settling in Niagara Falls.

family, community and society are available, Muslims living in the National Capital Region may be in a good position to maintain their Islamic identity in face of many challenges.

As a result of the above analysis, two scenarios appear to be connected:

1) Optimistic: a) those who see problems, b) those who see no problems, have strong Islamic identity, showing in "a" in clear - sightedness, in "b" in ability to have solved.

2) Pessimistic: "a" and "b" have weak Islamic identity, showing this in "a" as vulnerable and weakened, in "b" as indifferent or blind.

First scenario is probable, judging by the fact that only 19.8% are not committed (see chapter #1, p. 66).

CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONAL COMPLETENESS

Religious institutions have the greatest effect in keeping the immigrant's personal associations within the boundaries of the ethnic community ... The weight of the religious institutions can be attributed to the dominant role they hold in the community. Churches [mosques for Muslims] are very frequently the centre of a number of activities; associations are formed and collective activities are organized under their influence and support. (Breton p.200-201)

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, Islamic identity was examined by looking at a variety of psychosocial issues confronted in their everyday life by Muslims living in the National Capital Region. These issues were approached by using a series of questions which addressed the Muslim's perception of situations encountered in everyday life. Some of the ways the individual interacts with family, community and society were also shown to be important aspects of Islamic identity. Indeed, the individual's interactions with family, community and society were shown to contribute to an overall sense of belonging, solidarity and unity which, in turn, seem to influence the formation of Islamic identity for

the individual.

However, besides the ways in which situations are perceived and problems are resolved, other factors can be shown to influence the formation of Islamic identity. The individual's formal affiliations within the Muslim community are also important factors to consider. Some of these formal affiliations include the individual's interactions with different social and religious organizations in which the ethnic and cultural interests of the individual are represented, preserved and sustained. For instance, the presence of a mosque, schools and social and religious organizations contribute to the individual's sense of orientation within the community, while strengthening the bonds which exist within this community. In Ottawa, the presence of a mosque, an Islamic school and social and religious organizations such as the Ottawa Muslim Association and the Muslim Student Association facilitate for the individual and belong indeed to what Breton calls "institutional completeness." According to Breton:

The degree of institutional completeness of an immigrant's ethnic community is one of the main factors determining the direction of the change in the composition of his personal relations.¹

In the late 1950's Breton conducted an empirical research on ethnic groups in the Montreal area. In 1964 one of the most important explorations of ethnic communities in Canada resulted from Breton's discovery of "institutional completeness." For Breton, this phrase refers to "the ability of the ethnic community in the receiving society to attract the

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R. Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," American Journal of Sociology 70 (1964): 201.

immigrant into its social boundaries."²

This chapter will examine some aspects of institutional completeness in a brief social history of the Muslim community in Ottawa. Breton's concept of institutional completeness can be clearly demonstrated as it impacts on the Muslim's sense of Islamic identity. Some of the ways institutional completeness is achieved for the Muslim community in the National Capital Region are also shown.

In his study, Breton concentrated on the degree of institutional completeness of ethnic communities and how an immigrant can integrate into the receiving culture through his/her own ethnic community or through other ethnic groups. He did not examine individual behaviour and characteristics, but instead concentrated on the ability of the ethnic community to attract the immigrant into its social boundaries. Breton showed that this ability directly relates to the degree of institutional completeness of a particular ethnic group.

Institutional completeness can consequently be understood as "the extent to which an ethnic group in a particular locale possesses organizations developed by or for members of that ethnoculture."³ Certainly, the mosque, the school and certain associations can be understood as organizations which, within the Muslim community in the National Capital Region, are developed by and for members of this community. For this reason these organizations need to be regarded as contributors to Breton's concept.

2

Ibid., p. 193.

3

E. Herberg. Ethnic Groups in Canada: Adaptations and Transitions. Scarborough; Ontario: Nelson Canada, 1989. p. 208.

However, it is the mosque, more than any other institution or organization, which functions to reflect the Muslim's sense of Islamic identity as this identity is held in reference to the concept of institutional completeness. It was the importance of the mosque which became the focus of the early Muslim community in the Ottawa area. In many ways Islamic identity is concentrated in the functions and roles played by the mosque within the Muslim community.

In light of this understanding, this chapter will:

- discuss institutional completeness in a brief social history of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region;
- explore the roles played by the Ottawa Muslim Association, the Ottawa Mosque and the Islamic schools in the area as examples of the way institutional completeness is facilitated for the Muslim community;
- address a revision in the conceptualization of institutional completeness as it relates specifically to Islamic identity.

Background: An Overview of the Muslim Community

The city of Ottawa and the neighbouring communities have felt and seen growth in their Muslim population, particularly in the last ten years. By 1979, the number of Muslims living in Ottawa had increased dramatically. As estimated by a member of the Ottawa Muslim community, there may be 10,000 to 12,000 Muslims residing in the

Canadian National Capital region today.⁴ This community is formed by people from several countries, various ethnic, economic, and educational backgrounds. However, they are united together by one main element which they have in common, despite their differences: their faith, Islam.

Islam is an all-encompassing religion. It binds the social and the spiritual aspects of life inextricably. In countries where the majority of the population is Muslim, the integration of religious and communal life is enforced, not through the political structure of the state but by the will of people. People who came to Ottawa from Muslim countries may feel suddenly deprived of a social structure that encouraged the practice of Islam and a strong sense of Islamic identity. Once in Canada, they encountered a culture where religion only constitutes a fraction of people's lives. Religion, for most Canadians, does not play the same comprehensive role as Islam. In his conclusion Bibby wrote:

Religion, Canadian-style, is mirroring culture. A specialized society is met with specialized religion. Consumer-minded individuals are provided with a smorgasbord of fragment choices. Culture leads; religion follows. While the situation is not unique to Canada, it is nonetheless the Canadian religious reality.⁵

For many Muslim immigrants, the move to Canada may be a difficult transition due to some of these reasons. Familiar resources appear, initially, to be lacking. The history

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Figure quoted from interview with Dr. Daood Hamdani, January 28, 1988, who published the following articles: "Muslims and Christian life in Canada." Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affair. 1, no. 1 (1979) 51-59; "Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic." Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affair. 5, no. 1, (1983-84) 7-16; "Income Disparity Between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Canada." Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affair. 1-11.

5

Reginald Bibby. Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and potential of Religion in Canada. Toronto, Ontario: Irwin Publishing, 1987, p. 233.

of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region begins in 1903 with the emigration to Canada of the first Muslim family to inhabit the region. This event is followed by a process which, as we shall see, constitutes the gradual formation of a cohesive community in Ottawa which is comprised by the sharing among new Muslim immigrants of a number of needs and concerns. The formation of the Ottawa Muslim Association functioned to address these needs, and further faced directly the need expressed by the community to build a mosque. Almost immediately after the mosque was constructed, the community undertook to set up educational resources for their children upon which they could depend.

The First Muslims in the National Capital Region

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the only Muslim family in the National Capital Region was the Wahab family. This family consisted of eight people; two parents and six children. The father, Mr. Wahab, emigrated to Canada from Lebanon in 1903 (then known as Greater Syria). According to Eva Wahab who was the first Muslim born in Ottawa in September of 1914:

There were two or three single Muslim men in Ottawa at that time. All of them came from the same village in Lebanon call Kfarmishky, and they were living together as one family.⁶

In the late 1920's there were about 25 Muslims who were related to Mr. Wahab's family

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Excerpt from interview with Ms. Eva Wahab, June 1, 1991, at her residence.

living in Ottawa.

In 1921, every Sunday morning, at 10:00 a.m., my father used to teach me and [the] other few Muslim kids in Ottawa, the basic tenets of Islam and Arabic language [in] our basement. That was [known as] the first Muslim community in the National Capital Region. Nobody else [was] around [who could teach us].⁷

An increase in the number of immigrants from the Middle East saw a wave of Lebanese families arrive in Canada in 1956-57. "Five or six among these families were Muslims and chose Ottawa to be their final destination."⁸ Muslims from non-Arab countries started to come to Ottawa in the late 1950s. Their numbers started to grow dramatically, and the idea for the establishment of a Muslim organization became uppermost in their mind. This idea was based upon a number of needs shared by members of the small community: the need to educate their children according to their faith; a need to share together their experiences of discrimination and problems of acceptance in the host society; a need for a forum in which they could openly discuss issues affecting them in other ways (see some of the problems discussed in Chapter 2); a need to help each other in building a strong life in Canada; a need to have a community which would be a part of the larger Muslim community (Ummah) worldwide; and a need to express their faith together. A strong community would ideally possess the capacity to address these needs effectively, to function in an "institutionally complete" manner for Muslim immigrants to the region. Through the early process of sharing their needs

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Ibid.

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Excerpt from interview with Mr. Fathi John-Byne, May 31, 1991, at his residence.

together, and in the process of responding to these needs, Muslims in the Ottawa area formed a cohesive partnership: a community began to form, and its capacity to respond developed accordingly.

The Ottawa Muslim Association

Based upon series of shared needs and concerns, some pioneers within this early community made a decision to effectively respond to the various things they had in common with one another. These people were, of course, aware of the needs existing among Muslims in the National Capital Region on a first-hand basis. But they also possessed the ability to best address these needs. Within Canadian society there was a level of tolerance present whereby both the expression of needs and the capacity to respond to needs within the Muslim community could occur. In the early 1960s a collaboration within the community became the cornerstone for the Ottawa Muslim Association.

10 Muslims [who] originally came from Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, India, and Egypt got together and came up with the idea to establish the Ottawa Muslim Association. Our houses were the places where we conducted our meetings.⁹

In 1962 the Ottawa Muslim Association (O.M.A.) was established without an elected president. Decisions were made using consensus. Meetings held toward the foundation

⁹

Ibid.

of the Ottawa Muslim Association had taken place following Id prayers. Among the approximately 40 persons who attended the prayers, 10 individuals met afterwards. Membership also grew during the building of the High Commission of Pakistan at 505 Wilbrod Street. A constitution (see Appendix #C) was written at Muhammad Ghadban's¹⁰ house on Arlington Avenue. Mr. Fathi John-Byne, a Syrian-born Muslim was elected to be the first vice-president of the Ottawa Muslim Association. Other Lebanese, Indian and Pakistani Muslims were members of the executive committee of the O.M.A. In May 1963, Dr. Farid Ahmed, an Egyptian-born Muslim, was elected to be the first president of the O.M.A. Dr. Ahmed occupied the position of president of the association for the following 10 years.

In the 1960s, the Ottawa Muslim community was constituted as follows: 1/3 were immigrants [who came] from Lebanon, 1/3 were individuals [who] originally came from Pakistan, and the [remaining] 1/3 of the members in the community were from different ethnic backgrounds.¹¹

The major objective of the Ottawa Muslim Association during its early stages was how and where to perform the prayers. Sunday was the day when members of the Muslim community in the Ottawa area gathered for noon-prayers at the house of one of the Muslim families. As the congregation increased in the early nineteen-sixties, they became too numerous to pray in private residences. In 1963 the members of the old Western United church on Willington Street and the Minister, the late Rev. Harold Watts,

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Mr. Ghadban and other Lebanese Muslim families who immigrated from Majdal-Balhiss village in Lebanon were behind the foundation of the O.M.A. Almost the entire village of Majdal-Balhiss, including its chief (Muktar in Arabic) moved to the National Capital Region during the nineteen-sixties and afterwards.

¹¹

Excerpt from interview with Dr. Farid Ahmed, June 2, 1991, at his residence.

allowed the Muslims in Ottawa to pray in their church basement for two hours every Sunday. That was the first place where Muslims in the National Capital Region performed their prayers in a group form. According to Dr. Ahmed:

In 1965 when that church was demolished, and the congregation was moved to a newly constructed church on Northwestern Avenue, west of Ottawa, the Muslim community was allowed the same privileges as in the old church.¹²

Accompanying the steady expansion of the Ottawa Muslim community was a strong need to establish an independent religious institution which would not depend upon any non-Islamic facilities. In responding to this need a fund-raising campaign had been initiated even prior to the formal establishment of the O.M.A. "The first \$500.00 was donated by a Lebanese-Christian family."¹³ On 16 January 1964, the Ottawa Muslim Womens' Auxiliary was first established to assist in organizing social events within the community, such as annual dinners, sales and lectures in order to raise funds for the mosque.

Soon after Israel invaded and humiliated its neighbouring Arab countries, in 1967, the Ottawa Muslim community decided that it was time to stand on their own feet and build their own place of worship.¹⁴

Accordingly, the Ottawa Muslim Association (OMA) purchased two small old houses on Northwestern Avenue. One was used for prayers while the other was rented, until

¹²

Ibid.

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Excerpt from interview with Ms. Wahab, June 18, 1991.

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Excerpt from interview with Dr. Farid Ahmed, June 2, 1991, at his residence.

eventually in 1973 construction of the first Ottawa Mosque was started. The Ottawa Mosque was constructed from the financial support provided by the Muslim community in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Mosque

It is the **masjid** in Ottawa which does, more than anything else, appear to help new Canadian Muslims adapt to a non-Islamic society. In its role in facilitating adaptation for new immigrants to the Muslim community in Ottawa, the Ottawa mosque contributes strongly toward the institutional completeness desired by the Muslim community. The Ottawa mosque appears to successfully facilitate three major functions for the Muslim community: first, the mosque functions as a religious institution; second, the mosque functions as a social organization; and third, the mosque functions as an educational resource.

The mosque possesses both the capacity to attract new immigrants into the existing Muslim community and the capacity to function as an opportunity whereby new immigrants can more easily adapt to Canadian society. In its three-fold function, the Ottawa mosque also serves to meet the needs expressed by the community. According to Dr. Musbah Ahmad, one of the founders of the mosque in Ottawa:

When they (immigrants) come from a culture, and a religious culture, and other background, to get to be used to this culture that they are facing, with a free society, they have to make decisions between good and bad. They need to have the conviction, the faith, to do that. The mosque prevents

assimilation and offers a chance to adapt to a new way of life.¹⁵

Throughout the history of Islam, the mosque has always played an important role for Muslim society. It has been a place of prayer, a centre of political activities, an educational institution and the focal point of communal life. Now that Muslim communities have established themselves throughout the world, the religion and its primary institution, the mosque, have had to adapt to many of the norms and rules of their host-countries. This tendency has created thriving Muslim communities, each one distinct from another because of a unique blend of members and local traditions. Each mosque is designed to serve the specialized needs, individual and communal, of its population.

In the western part of the city of Ottawa, on the corner of Scott Street and Northwestern Avenue, stands the Ottawa mosque. The structure, complete with a bronze dome and Turkish-style minaret, is much more than a building dedicated to the worship of Allah. To the Muslim people of Ottawa it is a reflection of their identity as a religiously, culturally, and socially distinct group.

The mosques of God shall be visited and maintained by such as believe in God and the Last Day, establish regular prayers, and practise regular charity, and fear none (at all) except God. It is they who are expected to be on true guidance. (Qur'an IX:18)

The word 'mosque' comes from the Arabic, masjid, which means a place where one prostrates oneself, or a place of worship. The concept of the mosque originated during the life of Prophet Muhammad, who built the first house of Islam in Medina. The mosque in Medina was called "Masjid Qiba." Since the early Islamic period, the masjid

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Excerpt from interview with Dr. Musbah Ahmed, an immigrant from India, November 22, 1988.

has served many purposes. Not only was the mosque a place of worship, learning and prayer, but it functioned as the community's political and social centre.

The mosque was a place where believers assembled for the prayer around the Prophet, where he delivered his addresses which contained...regulations affecting the social life of the community; from here he controlled the religious and political community of Islam.¹⁶

In Islamic countries, the mosque has different functions than the Ottawa mosque. In the Middle East, for instance, the mosque functions for its members only in a strictly religious role. It does not provide political or educational guidance for the community (with the exception of Iran where the mosque functions to assume a central state role). In Ottawa, the mosque's operations are considerably different. While it is primarily a place of prayer, the mosque has developed into a thriving community centre geared to respond to the special needs of immigrant and Canadian-born Muslims alike.

The Ottawa mosque has adapted itself to help its community members in many aspects of their lives. The masjid is a place of worship, whether it be individual meditation or congregational prayer. This element remains universal and unchanged from the Islamic tradition. Yet many changes within the mosque have been made to accommodate the members' lifestyles which have adapted to life in the region. In an analogous study of the Toledo Muslim community, for instance, Elkholy showed that the mosque, which was built from assets attained through the sales of liquor, has been used for "American

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H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds. Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam. London: Luzac & Co., 1961, p. 331.

social activities [which] range from dating to mixed dancing."¹⁷

Another example, the emphasis on Sunday as a day of congregational prayer, has no traditional place in the history of Islam. While many members (male/female) go to masjid for Friday-noon-prayer, Sunday, in true western spirit, has become the family or community day of prayer and social activities for many Muslims. Also, associations similar to those of churches (such as the Women's Auxiliary and the youth group) have sprung up in the mosque. While these organizations are productive and socially beneficial to all, their resemblance to groups of the same name in the Christian church cannot be missed.

For members of the Ottawa Muslim community, however, any process of adaptation for their mosque to the region does not involve a complete departure from the mosque's traditional functions or resources.

Throughout the research conducted for this study, the following question was asked to the sample: "Do you know that there is a mosque in Ottawa?" Out of 152 Muslims who were selected for this research and who resided in the C.N.C.R., 150 (98.6%) reported yes while 2 (1.3%) reported no. Then, the following question was raised for those who said that they knew there is a mosque in Ottawa: "How often do you go to the mosque?" Figure #20 shows the percentage of informants (150) to the above question. Attendance at the Ottawa Mosque ranged on a scale from "daily," "weekly," "2-3 times a month," "3-4 times a year," and "never." Of 150 respondents of the research

¹⁷

Abdo Elkholy. "Religion and Assimilation in Two Muslim Communities in America." Ph.D. Diss. Princeton University, 1960, p.150.

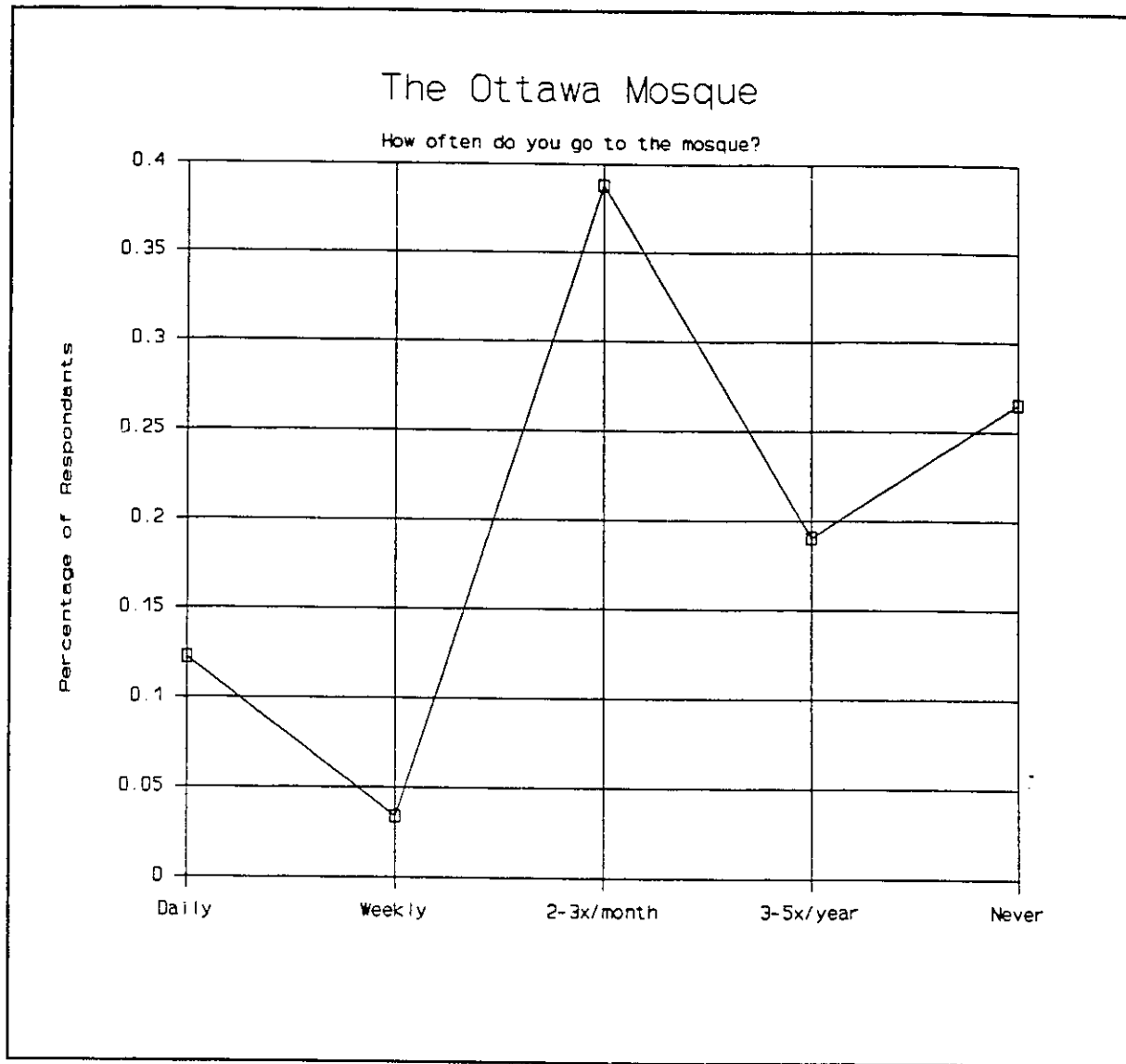


Figure 20

sample who knew there was a mosque in Ottawa, 18 (12%) reported they go to the mosque daily, 5 (3.3%) said they attended weekly, 57 (38%) went 2-3 times a month, 28 (18.6%) visit the mosque 3-5 times a year, and 39 (26%) people never went. Only 3 (2%) members of the sample did not respond to the question.

Out of a majority (57 or 38% of the sample) who indicated attendance at 2-3 times

each month, coupled with the 28 (18.6%) who reported attending 3-5 times each year, one could probably assume that attendance at the mosque, generally is low. The Imam of the Ottawa mosque confirms this fact (personal communication). For those who attend 2-3 times each month, it is likely that they attend only for Friday noon prayers (Jumah), but do not visit the mosque for the five daily prayers. For those who attend 3-5 times each year, it is probable that their attendance correspond to special prayers, such as the Ids prayers and some Friday prayers. Taking the additional 39 people (26%) into consideration who never attend the mosque, one can probably anticipate that the Ottawa mosque has become less important for these people. According to the Imam, this is due, in large part, to a lack of Islamic religiosity for these people. Thus, it is possible that a declining interest in the religious significance of the mosque is occurring for approximately 124 (84.3%) of the people who responded to the question on mosque attendance. However, these findings are consistent with the drop-off indicated in regular religious attendance for other religious groups in Canada.

The participation of Buddhists, Moslems, and Hindus - although not well documented to date - nonetheless appears to be declining as followers and their offspring become increasingly integrated into Canadian economic and social life.¹⁸

Accompanying the substantial increase in the population of Muslims living in the National Capital Region, the Ottawa Mosque has witnessed a substantial growth in membership since construction in the early 1970s. While the daily prayers at the mosque do not attract a wide attendance, the Friday-noon-prayer is well-attended. Taking the 57

¹⁸

Bibby, p. 22.

individuals who attend 2-3 times each month in combination with the 18 who attend daily and another 5 people who attend weekly, the attendance at Friday-noon-prayers can be demonstrated at approximately 54.4% of the sample (see Chapter 1, Figure #3).

The experience of individuals at the mosque seems to include a sense of religious identity. Each member brings an entire lifetime of cultural experience into the mosque. Yet all of these individuals join together in the bond of their common beliefs, and separate past experiences seem to fuse. What individuals bring and receive as individuals or in a collective sense to the mosque is an initial part of Breton's institutional completeness: "the ability of the ethnic community in the receiving society to attract the immigrant into its social boundaries."¹⁹ The mosque has the ability to attract individuals from the Muslim community because of its capability to represent Islam, historically and traditionally. The mosque functions as a facilitator for an increasing sense of cohesiveness, a strengthening of feelings of solidarity among individuals in the Muslim community and as a common and central bonding force which brings these individuals together in the first place.

Every Muslim has something to offer to the community and, similarly, the mosque has something to offer to each member, in shaping their Islamic identity. The role of integrating many Muslims from many different backgrounds played by the mosque is another aspect of Breton's institutional completeness (see Breton's footnote at the beginning of this chapter). There is, in other words, an exchange of attributes between

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R. Breton, "Institutional Completeness of Ethnic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants," The American Journal of Sociology, 70 (1964): 193.

the Muslim person and the Ottawa Mosque. On the one side of this equation, the Muslim brings to the mosque a sense of uniqueness and differences based on the culture, customs and background from which he/she originates. On the other side of the equation, the mosque provides an opportunity for integrating the differences of individuals into the sense of community and collectivity which exists at the mosque: solidarity, unity, cohesiveness and a strengthening of religiosity (spirituality, security, faith and prayer). The economy of this exchange between the Muslim and the mosque seems to reflect both aspects of identity, namely social and religious.

By examining some of the social functions of the Ottawa Mosque, some of the building blocks of the Muslim community in the region can be approached. The mosque reflects the beliefs of individuals in the community: unity, equality and belonging, as well as their belief in a strong sense of morality. But perhaps, what the Ottawa Mosque represents most to the Muslims in the Ottawa area is a symbolic reflection of their Islamic identity, indeed, a culmination of the community's historical response to a community-specific need.

Many people who come to the National Capital Region from Muslim countries suffer initially from culture-shock when they enter what they view as North American's highly individualistic society. They are faced, sometimes for the first time, with many different problems such as crime, drugs and lifestyles that generally contradict their beliefs and their previous experiences (see Chapter 2). Despite the numerous problems they face, and despite the tensions they experience with a new society, some Muslim immigrants fully accept the new values and the new practices of a new social

environment, such as that which they experience in Canada. It may be, in this sense, that the Ottawa mosque provides an opportunity for an adaptability which mediates between the Muslim community, the recent immigrant and Canadian society, generally.

However, the presence of the mosque in Ottawa may also be perceived as preventing complete assimilation for a recent immigrant from a Muslim country. The mosque may function to provide the Muslim immigrant with an immediate resource for maintaining original cultural, religious and social values. Further, and by working as a resource for the Muslim community, the mosque can play a role in easing the transition from a Muslim country to a non-Muslim country. It can be seen as a motivation for some Muslims to avoid the temptations of a new social environment, to prevent some people from straying from the Islamic path, and it may contribute to making them law-abiding citizens of Canada:

The purpose of the mosque as far as we see in Canada, is to help the Muslim immigrants become better Canadians, better human beings, and to keep them from crimes or to provide the spirituality they need. And also, to make them good citizens...to keep them from drugs, alcohol, and to offer religious education.²⁰

As a community centre, the mosque also functions as a resource by helping recent immigrants to establish new social contacts within the Muslim community, and sometimes, outside the Muslim community.

La mosquée est un lieu de rassemblement qui permet la constitution d'un réseau social et la reconstitution d'une société que l'émigration avait

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Excerpt from interview with Dr. Musbah Ahmed, October 10, 1991.

fragmentée.²¹

New members can meet with people from the same country of origin, who speak the same language and who share the same culture, thus permitting them to make friends and to re-create social bonds similar to those they knew traditionally. Interaction with the Muslim community may also provide the recent immigrant for leads in accessing employment. The mosque encourages these meetings to take place in order to provide a sense of solidarity and cohesion for members of the community.

On Friday, there is Friday prayer around noon time. The mosque is full and we get a chance to greet one another and to know what is happening with the other. So, we take a few minutes to chat with one another, shake hands...So, we get a chance to socialize.²²

The mosque combines social and religious activities which respectively encourage active faith and a strong community life. Because Islam preaches unity of the spiritual and the worldly aspects of life, of the religious and the secular, community gatherings and mosque-related activities include both social and spiritual elements. Among these activities are Sunday school, family nights, dinners, holidays festivities, youth group activities, lectures, and meetings for the different associations. Friday-noon-prayer, at the mosque, is the most important socio-religious aspect of the community (see chapter 2: Friday-noon-prayer). New members' participation in any of these activities at the Ottawa

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Albert Bastenier et F. Dassetto. *L'Islam transplanté*. Bruxelles: Editions EPO, 1984, p. 62. Translated, this quote says: The mosque is a place of gathering which allows the constitution of a social network, and the reconstitution of a society fragmented by migration.

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Excerpt from interview with Dr. Muhammad Bakari, clinical psychologist and active member of the Muslim community in North America, May 5, 1990.

Mosque assures a connection to the community. As explained by the imam of the Ottawa Mosque:

That way, they [new Muslims in the area] have a link, a religious link, which in Islam is a strong link. Then they can get in contact [with one another], meet people from their own country...²³

The mosque helps to realize a union between different members of the community, since Islam puts heavy emphasis on the sense of belonging and solidarity to a larger Ummah (the Muslim community). The mosque, both socially and religiously, fosters a sense of cohesiveness, of belonging and of unity for Muslims living in the National Capital Region:

Inside the mosque, comments a converted Muslim, it is like a family...Every one called 'brother' or 'sister' even if you are not related...There is a good community feeling.²⁴

The creation of these strong kinship-like ties among members of the community shows the depth of the underlying bond. This family-like atmosphere certainly helps to welcome and to assure immigrants or those who are new to the mosque, that all Muslims are part of a wider, universal community.

Another purpose of the mosque is mentioned by Bastien and Sassetto in their book L'Islam transplanté:

²³

Excerpt from interview with the Imam of Ottawa Mosque, Dr. Tawfik Shaheen. An Egyptian scholar at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Dr. Shaheen has been working as an Imam for the Muslim community in Ottawa since his immigration to Canada in 1981.

²⁴

Excerpt from interview with Mr. Bruce Stacey, January 3, 1988.

On pourrait se demander par ailleurs, si la mosquée n'est pas aussi le lieu d'affirmation et d'identité de la société des hommes adultes (ou chômeurs) dont la position sociale et l'autorité sont actuellement en crise.²⁵

The mosque, for those who face forms of oppression in their day to day lives, becomes a place where they are free of social pressure and free to achieve affirmation as human beings before Allah. Self-affirmation is an essential part of the Islamic faith. Many Muslim immigrants find work in low status positions when they move to this city, regardless of their higher educational and occupational status in their countries of origins. It is not unusual to find a Muslim taxi driver in the Ottawa area who possesses a Ph.D. in his / her field. They may find these kinds of jobs contribute to a lessening of self-esteem, to an impoverishment of optimism and to a very real sense that they, along with their jobs, occupy positions of "low status", ie., inferiority. The mosque allows these individuals to affirm themselves as strong and good men/women, whereas society may have labelled them as part of an inferior class of people (see Chapter 2). At the mosque, many Muslim individuals together form a cohesive majority which empowers and reinforces personal attributes. Mr. Bukari, re-elected president, 1991-1992 of the Ottawa Muslim Association (OMA) explains:

Once you go in the mosque, the distinction between rich and poor, official and non-official, that difference goes. The difference there [in the mosque] is how good of a person you are, how learned you are in your faith, what kind of a gentleman [sic] you are. It's on a spiritual level... You may be a very rich [person] but you are respected in the community for how good you are to your community and to humanity... So, in the same spirit, there is an equality there [in the mosque]. A person who is a taxi driver or a

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Bastenier et Dassetto, p.63. Translated, this means: We must ask ourselves if the mosque is not also a place of affirmation and of identity for the (unemployed or) adult male society whose position and authority are presently challenged.

shopkeeper or a butcher, of ordinary means or poor, finds respect, equality, love and affection. And that goes for both female and male.²⁶

Therefore, the mosque also facilitates self-affirmation for individuals before the community regardless of income, ethnicity, nationality, or gender. For new Canadian Muslim immigrants who can not find work or who must do menial work in order to survive, the mosque remains a positive source of support and spiritual uplifting because of the equality that exists within it.

The Muslim community in the National Capital Region is comprised primarily of two generations. "In the case of the Canadian-born population, as already stated, almost all of them are first generation Canadians."²⁷ Almost 92% of Canadian-born Muslims are under the age of 25.²⁸ These young people do not look toward Islamic countries for support and guidance in their faith, nor for a sense of origin. Instead, they depend upon their experience in the Ottawa area, and the way of life they have become accustomed to. Since they were not born in an Islamic society where a whole society shares a system of common Islamic values and practices, many differences exist between second generation Muslims and first generation Muslims. Among these differences, an Islamic education is now left up to families, and sometimes available within the Muslim community in the National Capital Region.

²⁶

Excerpt from interview with Mr. Saeed Bukari. Mr. Bukari is the current president of the Muslim Community in Ottawa who immigrated from Pakistan in 1964.

²⁷

Rashid p.20.

²⁸

Rashid p.20.

For young Muslim adults and teen-agers, the problem of living in a non-Muslim society such as the National Capital Region is fairly complex. They are surrounded by non-Muslim peers who date, who interact freely with the opposite sex, who mingle in bars, etc. Alcohol and drugs are also important issues facing these young people, both as intrinsically dangerous substances and as substances that are strictly prohibited in Islam (see Chapter 2). Today's young Muslims are continuously faced with the so-called forbidden values. For this reason, in an effort to resist temptation, Muslim youth are encouraged to socialize with other Muslims.

The mosque serves as a social centre for this interaction to take place. There, young men and women can meet in a fashion which is acceptable to Islamic tradition.

A. Rashid wrote:

During the last decade, as their numbers grew, the Muslim Canadians have quickly established centres in most urban areas across the country. These centres not only provide the new generation of Canadian-born Muslims with religious education, but also act as social and communal institutions for the Muslim Canadians. It is therefore, expected that the incidence of inter-faith marriages is likely to be smaller in the future than in the past.²⁹

Many members of the community interviewed for this research spoke favourably of the youth activities in the Ottawa Mosque. One older woman expressed her approval of the youth program:

We have a lot of young people now in the community. How are these boys and girls going to meet? They get together here. They have sports, they meet at Islamic functions, fun functions, too... The Muslim youth born here, they have two cultures, and this helps them to deal with this... Mostly, the youth have their own functions and programs. That's healthy, I believe in

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Rashid p.60.

that.³⁰

For the Muslim community to remain strong and for the religion to be passed on to future generations, it is very important to educate these young people as well as to respond to their social needs in a manner that supports their developing lives as faithful Muslims. This may be accomplished by strengthening and sustaining their Islamic identity through the activities provided by the Ottawa Mosque.

Of the Canadian-born Muslims, over three-fourths are under the age of 10.³¹ Responding to this statistic, the mosque serves also as an educational centre for the young children of the Muslim community. Education is one of the traditional functions of the mosque. As an educational institution, the early mosque was the most effective instrument in the teaching of literacy to Arab society. This tradition of education continues at the Ottawa Mosque. The first Canadian-born generation as well as the converts are seen by the Muslim community as needing religious education in order to nurture an Islamic identity.

The Ottawa Mosque is an institution which is central to the spiritual training of the community's children and young adults. Equally, these youngsters need to feel the cohesiveness of community life and to have contact with Muslim peers in order to remain active members in Islam. The mosque helps these Canadian-born Muslims understand their faith and get to know other young people of the same religious background by

³⁰

Excerpt from interview with a woman, who do not want to be identify, March 25, 1988.

³¹

Rashid p.20.

providing both educational opportunities and community resources for these individuals.

The whole social aspect of the mosque is particularly important for Muslims living in the National Capital Region. In Islamic countries, one feels a community bond because of the predominant nature of Muslim life which appears to revolve around a basic sense of social belonging. In Canada, though, one must seek out union with other Muslims. The mosque is an excellent place for new Canadians to get in touch with the community which can offer them support in their faith, help them in their transition to North American life and introduce them to new social circles. The Ottawa Mosque has a school where children attend classes on Sunday morning. It is interesting to note that although Friday is the important day for congregational prayer in Islamic tradition, Sunday has become the main family day at the mosque. This is, no doubt, due to the domination of the 'Sunday service' and the 'Sunday school' in the context of Western Christian tradition.

Regardless of the day it is held, the school is designed to educate the children in their faith. The students learn to read and write Arabic; they also study the Qur'an so as to be able to recite it and to understand its deeper meaning. The community's oldest Ottawan-born member comments:

The kids have to learn Arabic, to know the Qur'an. When I was young, there was no school; my father had to teach us at home... Now, at the mosque, they learn the Qur'an line by line, chapter by chapter. But the fundamental principle (of the school) is to teach them how to be Muslim, to be a Muslim in every respect.³²

This type of education is viewed as a process which prevents the children from

32

Excerpt from interview with Eva Wahab, June 17, 1991.

losing their Islamic identity, while at the same time promoting their Canadian identity. By coming to the mosque to attend Sunday school, the children not only learn to live their religion but they also have an opportunity to integrate themselves into the Muslim community. Dr. Ali Omar, an Egyptian immigrant and instructor for the Arabic program at the mosque school, confirms this:

Since the inception of the mosque, the children are being educated from about kindergarten age. So, that generation will have a firm foundation as well as social contacts.³³

Both the social and educational aspects of the mosque school are important in keeping the younger generation strong, for providing necessary leadership and resources which may prevent them from being harmed by western influences. Yvonne Haddad, in her report on the topic, concluded: "In sum, Muslims, on the whole feel strongly that the mosque is an important source of support as they attempt to raise their children in the Islamic faith."³⁴

"The Ottawa Centre Mosque School" operates from September to June, from 9:30 a.m to 12:45 p.m. An estimated 140 students attend the mosque school and approximately 10 volunteer teachers cover the classes from Kindergarten to Grade 6. The position of the principal is also filled on a voluntary basis. Students who attend this school must pay \$20 as tuition fees. These students come from different ethnic backgrounds.

³³

Excerpt from interview with Dr. Ali Omar, November 22, 1988.

³⁴

Yvonne Haddad and Adair T. Lumis. Islamic Values in the United States: A Comparative Study. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 51.

In its seventeen years of operation, since 1973, the mosque school has not experienced any noteworthy improvement in the educational system within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. Lack of standard curriculum, a lack of qualified teachers, and most of all the low level of motivation on the parents' part may be factors contributing to a low rate of improvement.

The idea that the school time ends at the time of zuhur (noon) prayer give the students a chance to participate in the prayer and have a sense of belonging to their community. It is also important to the parents that their children assemble before the imam for one half hour every time before the school begins. The imam preaches to his students the basic tenets of Islam and recites from the Qur'an. The assembly before the imam may initiate these children to develop an authentic religious sentiment.

Islamic Schools in the National Capital Region

One factor which contributes to the difficulty of transition, for many Muslims, is the lack of Islamic educational resources which are seen as an important functional aspect for the preservation of identity. In this view, Islamic educational resources are seen to: preserve the values, identity and knowledge of Islamic culture; to uphold the comprehensive nature of Islam (as a way of life rather than a single factor); to promote a sense of belonging and community bonding which contributes to an overall sense of unity within this community; and which is aimed at providing a relevant heritage for

succeeding generations. Since there were 4,325 Muslims living, in 1981, in the national capital Region³⁵, the need for Islamic educational institutions has been expressed by the Muslim community. Indeed, the role of dependable educational resources has become an essential part of the community's sense of institutional completeness. Although the mosque school in Ottawa has survived for quite a long time, other similar schools in North America have closed after only a few years of operation. A study in cultural anthropology has been conducted on the Islamic Lebanese Community in the United States:

These schools, (Sunday Schools) as well as the Arabic schools, never lasted more than three years. The failure of these schools is due to the lack of financing and qualified teachers.³⁶

The school system situated within the Muslim community in the National Capital Region needs to be regarded as an integral part of the overall Islamic sense of institutional completeness. Islamic schools contribute to institutional completeness in two major ways: by providing a place where children can be educated according to their Islamic values and tradition; and by providing a sense of organization within the Muslim community which strengthens both the boundaries and the sense of cohesion within this community.

There are five available Islamic schools within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., four of which operate only on a part-time basis. Two more part-time schools

³⁵

Statistic Canada, "Population, Language, Ethnic origin, Religion, Place of birth, Schooling" Canadian Census, 1981. Ottawa: Ontario, Minister of Supply and Services, 1984, Table 5.

³⁶

Atif Wasfi. An Islamic Lebanese Community in U.S.A: A Study in Cultural Anthropology. Beirut, Lebanon: Beirut Arab University, 1971, p. 47.

were opened³⁷, one known as the Somalian Heritage Cultural School and other known as the Arabic Classic School. Another full-time school opened in 1987 (The Ottawa Islamic Community School). These schools are located in every part of the city of Ottawa. There are two in Ottawa Centre, the Mosque school and the Islamic School of Ottawa which meets Saturday mornings (locally known as the Arabic school).

There are two other schools, one in the East end and the other in the Western part of the city, but one of the only four full-time schools in Canada is located at Fisher Heights Public School in Nepean (Southwest Ottawa). All of these schools seem to have one goal, which is to provide their students with an Islamic education that enables them to maintain their cultural, social, and religious values.

The East end school and the school in Ottawa West are concentrated on a local constituency of Muslims, while the Summer school does not attract many students who value their vacations from the school year. Due to the important role Islamic schools play in providing institutional completeness for the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., this analysis will focus on the Islamic School of Ottawa, the Mosque School and the Ottawa Islamic Community School (the Full-time school). While 24.3% of the research sample reported sending their children to Islamic schools, it is still estimated that approximately 400 children attend Islamic schools within the region. Table #9 indicates the frequency of children attending Islamic schools within the sample.

37

Both schools were established in the last two years, and according to sources associated with them, "there are over 150 child attending [each school]."

TABLE: 9**Islamic School Attendance (Sample) in 1988**

School	Respondents	%
Ottawa	8	21.6
Mosque	21	56.7
East	1	2.7
West	2	5.4
Summer	1	2.7
Full-time	4	10.8
Total:	37	99.9

Respondents: 37 (24.3%); No Report: 115 (75.6%); Total Sample: 152

The Islamic School of Ottawa was established in 1974 and is currently located in the west part of the Ottawa area, at Saint Elizabeth Roman Catholic School. It is operated on a part-time basis, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, every Saturday. This school is called the Saturday school, or the Arabic school since all the staff and the students are of Arabic descent. Although the school concentrates on teaching Islam and the Arabic language to Muslims, non-Muslim students also attend. To attend the school, each student may pay \$30 to \$50 as a donation. This donation covers the cost of the student's transportation to and from the school. Unlike Sunday School which receives its financial support from the Muslim community, the Islamic School of Ottawa receives financial assistance from Ontario Ministry of Education through the Heritage Language Programme. At the time of this research (1988) there were 158 students registered in the

school, and 13 teachers. The principal and founder of the school is Mr. Qasem Mahmud who immigrated to Canada from Palestine in 1966, and is currently an employee at the Department of National Defence in Ottawa. According to Mr. Mahmud:

Six of the thirteen teachers are paid by the Heritage Language Programme through the Ottawa Board of Education. Based on their (the teachers) experience, the salaries range from \$40 to \$70 per week. We did not receive any funds from the community, but [a] few parents gave some donations.³⁸

The main objective of this school is to teach Muslim children the Arabic language and culture, but for Mr. Mahmud, the objective is more specifically "to develop learning material in Islamic education that has a North American flavour and to develop a curriculum for Islamic schools across Canada."³⁹ Mr. Mahmud's comments regarding curriculum development specific to an Islamic education reflects the importance he feels for communicating dependable information to students which is globally applicable and accurate (within North America).

The only full-time Islamic school in the National Capital Region and one of only four in Canada is the Islamic Community School. Its official status within Ministry of Education was obtained when it was recognized as a private school. The school was established in 1987 by a few members of the Muslim community in Ottawa. It is located on 10 Coral Avenue in Nepean (a suburb of Ottawa). 30 students were registered at the opening of the school in 1987, but for the current academic year, 1990-1991, there are 85 students

³⁸

Unstructured interview with Mr. Qasem Mahmud at the Islamic School of Ottawa on Saturday, May 18th, 1991.

³⁹

The Ottawa Citizen Sunday Edition, Mosaic, col. 2, October 2, 1988.

attending the school. At the present time, four full-time qualified teachers are teaching from Junior Kindergarten level to Grade 6 level, while 8 employees work as part-time teachers or helpers in different areas. An acting principal was on duty this year. On an organizational basis, the school functions with a seven member Board of Directors, an Education Committee, and the staff.

Mr. Sulaiman Khan, a Canadian government employee, who emigrated with his wife and to this country from Guyana in 1964, was the founder of this school. Mr. Khan expressed the need of his community to establish a full-time Islamic school.

Four years after the purchase of the school from the Carleton Board of Education, the community was able to clear all the debts and now owns the building which is presently assessed at \$3,000,000.00. The financial support received from the Muslim community in Ottawa as well as from other Muslim communities in North America seems to indicate that a strong sense of commitment exists among this community which is keenly interested in providing resources for dependable Islamic education. Indeed, this financial commitment has kept the school operating for the past four years. The methods used to collect funds include fund-raising dinners, revenues from renting and leasing parts of the school building, and occasional donations from the Ottawa Muslim community. Parents of students also must pay tuition fees to register their children. The fees range from \$200 to \$300 a month per student, and the school's tuition takes into consideration the number of students in each family, the financial ability of the family to pay and the grades that these children will attend.

The Islamic Community School follows the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum

which is based on the guidelines of the Ontario private school system. Beside the regular subjects which can be taught in any public school in Ontario in the English language, the Islamic school provides French as a second language and Arabic as an "Islamic" language. The Islamic Studies are part of the school's educational program. Although two of the four regular teachers are non-Muslims, the student observes the Islamic rituals and performs the daily prayers that fall within school hours as well as celebrating Islamic events on a regular basis.

The rationale for having a full-time Islamic school is based upon a simple concept: accompanying regular developmental stages, a child's gradual construction of personality should be based on his/her own culture and values; identity, as a final stage of adolescent development, may be partially based upon a sound Islamic education at earlier stages. A consciousness of culture and values is a requisite for the development of personality, and an Islamic education promotes this consciousness. Yet, in addition to providing an orientation for personality which is grounded in an Islamic education, Islamic educators also feel that it is important to blend topics from a Canadian curriculum with the educational process. This will serve to broaden the student's capacity to comprehend issues which are unique and specific for a Muslim living in Canada. An identity which is structured, in part, on this educational process, may in fact lead to the formation of a healthy individuality which may, in turn, contribute positively to Canadian society.

Thus, Breton's institutional completeness can be shown to exist in the context of Islamic education with respect to the goals set out for this education: first, the contribution which, ultimately, students who are educated in the Islamic schools will make

to the larger society. This contribution occurs, not only due to the fact that individuals are trained within the educational system to function as responsible Muslims, but because these individuals are simultaneously taught to function as responsible Canadians. Second, institutional completeness exists within the context of an Islamic education in the school's capacity to attract new immigrants to the Muslim community, and to meet their needs. This reciprocal element of institutional completeness may, of course, be shown for other ethnic minorities in Canada where education exists as a facilitator for social responsibility, as a promoter for distinct culture and values and for the role a child will play in the future society in relation to these factors. The part eventually played by children who are educated in Islamic schools must be seen as an essential result of institutional completeness because Islamic education leads, finally, to better understanding, of the uniqueness of being a Muslim in Canada.

Through the research process an important question was asked regarding ways that informants might strengthen their Islamic education. One of the ways given was to establish "a full-time Islamic school." Out of 152 respondents, 62 (40.7%) informants of the research sample selected "a full-time school" from a list of 15 categories as a means for strengthening their Islamic education. More than half (59.2%) of the sample did not respond. Figure #21 shows the importance assigned by 62 informants within the research sample of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. to the full-time school as a way to strengthen their Islamic education. The range of importance was measured on a scale ranging from a value of 1 (not important) to a value of 5 (very important). Approximately quarter of the 62 respondents reported that a full-time school is not an important way to

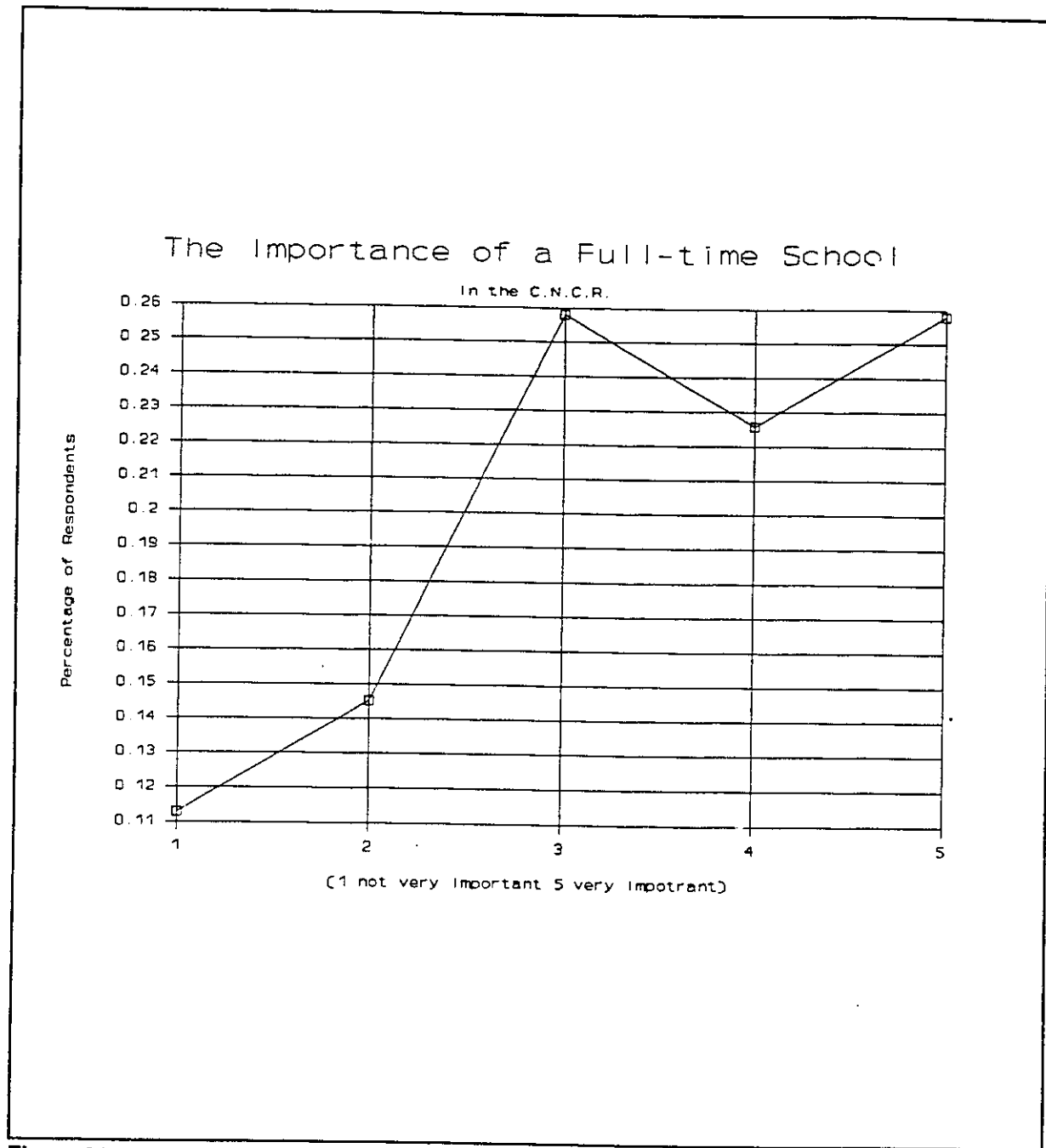


Figure 21

strengthen their Islamic education. Almost half of the 62 respondents to this item reported that a full-time school is a very important way to strengthen Islamic education,

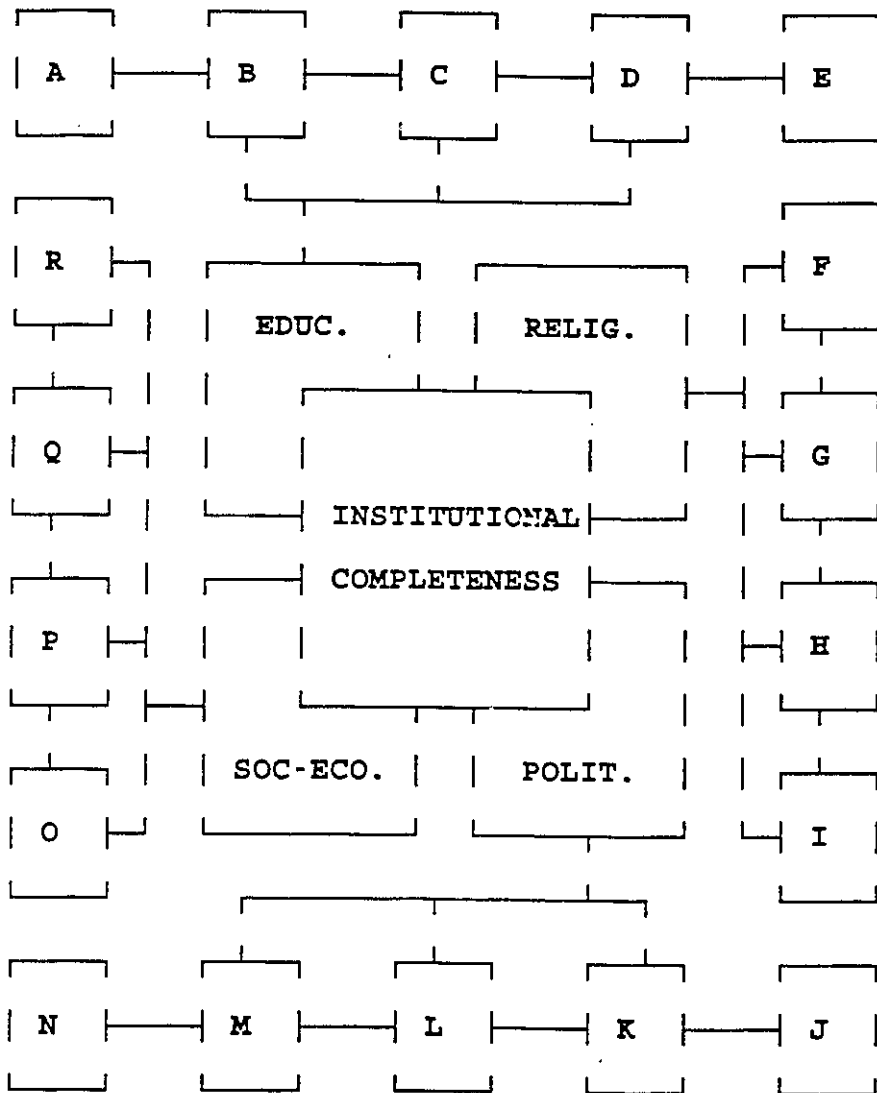
while the remaining quarter gave a moderate rating to the importance of a full-time school (3).

Other Factors

Certainly, it is not correct to suggest that only the Ottawa Muslim Association, the Ottawa Mosque and several Islamic schools are the ingredients contributing to Breton's concept of institutional completeness for the Muslim community in Ottawa. Other factors are likely contributors to an overall sense of well-being and completeness for the community. These additional contributors may include, as Table #10 suggests, economic and financial resources, community resources, and various activities and facilities unique to the Muslim community in Ottawa. In conjunction with one another, and probably in conjunction with other factors as well (ie. social tolerance, geographical proximity, the historical continuity of the community, etc.), these resources contribute to the institutional completeness of the Muslim community in Ottawa by providing: the capacity to attract new immigrants; the capacity to address the needs of both new immigrants and the existing community; and the capacity to facilitate integration for members of the Muslim community into Canadian society, more generally.

TABLE: 10

Institutional Completeness: Method of Analysis



Educational Institutions: A. The Islamic School of Ottawa

B. Mosque School

C. Eastend / Westend / Summer Schools

D. Islamic Community School (full-time)

E. Conferences / lectures / scholars

Religious Institutions: F. Ottawa Mosque

G. The Imam

H. Religious groups (Halakas)

I. Friday and Id prayers

Socio-economical Inst.: J. Zakah collections and distributions

K. Job opportunities

L. Overseas and local donations

M. Marriage / divorce / cemetery

N. Restaurants / stores / etc...

Political Institutions: O. Ottawa Muslim Association (O.M.A)

P. Muslim Student Association (M.S.A)

Q. Ottawa Muslim Women Auxiliary

Association (O.M.W.A)

R. Islamic Society of North America (I.S.N.A.)

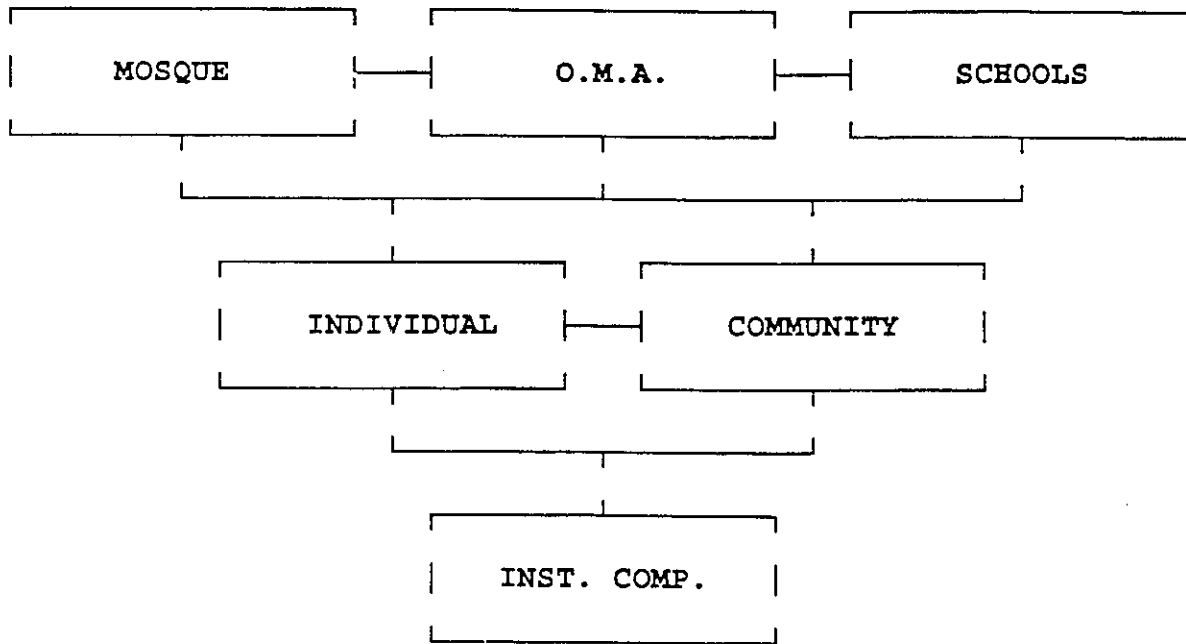
Institutional Completeness and Islamic Identity

Does Breton's conceptualization of institutional completeness, with respect to the Muslim community in Ottawa, contribute to the formation of Islamic identity?

This question must be addressed by taking into consideration the fact that, in the case of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region, any sense of group identity was preceded considerably by the strong Islamic identity which existed among separate individuals. It may have been this strong sense of identity which brought together the 10 individuals who organized the Ottawa Muslim Association. Indeed, Breton's conceptualization of institutional completeness might require revision in order to specifically apply to an analysis of the Muslim community in Ottawa. For example, it may be difficult to assess which has the greater impact: institutional completeness upon identity, or identity upon institutional completeness. Part of the difficulty may be found in the nature of institutional completeness itself: is institutional completeness an end-result of a series of factors, or, instead, a process in which a variety of factors co-exist?

TABLE: 11

Institutional Completeness: Method of Definition



Perhaps the revision occurs when institutional completeness is conceptualized as both an end-result which culminates in a capacity or ability of an ethnic community, and as a process in which this capacity and ability develops. As shown in Table #11, this definition broadens the role of individual Islamic identity considerably, placing it evenly on par with Breton's placement of the community. There are four ways in which this dual aspect of institutional completeness can be demonstrated. These include the examples of: individual contact, community continuity, group solidarity and social integration.

In the chronology of events which comprise the history of the Muslim community in Ottawa, the first event which led to the formation of community involved the action of separate individuals who shared common needs, issues, problems, concerns and aspirations. The basis for the formation of the Ottawa Muslim Association was specifically a response to those things shared by these individuals. In order to address their common issues effectively, these individuals formed a group. Ostensibly, different individuals discussed their common concerns in an atmosphere of sharing and mutual regard. The process of sharing their concerns in a social context led, eventually, to the formation of an organization which later represented these concerns and further, the concerns of new members of the community as well. In the case of the Ottawa Muslim Association, institutional completeness (the ability to attract) is an end result: an organization which meets the needs of the ethnic community. However the achievement of this end result is itself the outcome of a process of collaboration among separate individuals. Institutional completeness, in the case of the O.M.A. must be regarded therefore as a goal-directed process (the need to collaborate for separate individuals).

The second event which contributes to the well-being of the Muslim community in Ottawa is the achievement of a sense of community continuity. While institutional completeness may refer, in this respect, to a systematic purpose which is strong within the community (end result), it must also refer to the process of achieving this aim for the community. For example, in the early history of the Muslim community in Ottawa a major purpose for collaboration among members of this community was the construction of the Ottawa Mosque. But this result was not achieved without members of this community

going through the processes of longing for, planning, fund-raising, and eventually building this structure in which their Islamic identity was maintained and reinforced. In the case of the Ottawa Mosque, institutional completeness refers then, not only to the different functions of the Mosque itself (ability to attract), but to the processes by which this aim was achieved (the need for members of the community to collaborate).

The third event which contributes to the strength of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region is the achievement of a group solidarity. Group solidarity includes a sense of autonomy, community empowerment, cohesion and self-sufficiency for the Muslim community. Indeed, group solidarity functions as an end-result (ongoing) of community continuity, yet it is not achieved without considerable process. This process for the Muslim community involved the sharing of needs and concerns, an ongoing provision of resources (such as Islamic schools) and bonding within the community. Institutional completeness must refer, therefore, not only to the end-result of group solidarity for the Muslim community (the ability to attract) but also to the process by which this end-result is eventually achieved (by strengthening their resources).

Finally, the fourth event which contributes to the significance of the Muslim community in a non-Islamic society is the integration which this community achieved with respect to Canadian society, generally. However, this end-result is not freestanding. Instead, integration for the Muslim community was achieved, gradually, through a process of adaptation that is facilitated by Islamic schools, through the activities of the Ottawa Muslim Association and through the three-part functions of the Ottawa Mosque. Institutional completeness does, of course, refer to the community's integration into the

receiving culture, as Breton infers in his definition (end-result). But in the case of integration, institutional completeness must also take into consideration the process of adaptation by which this community achieves integration.

Indeed, in each of the four examples given here, institutional completeness refers not only to a final ability for the community, but to the processes by which this ability is achieved by the community. If this dual definition of institutional completeness can be considered, then it can refer to Islamic identity as the capacity of individuals and communities to achieve a sense of belonging, purpose, autonomy and integration. In this sense, taking the specific example of the Ottawa Muslim Association into consideration, it is probable that the motivation guiding the formation of community is an individual Islamic identity which precedes the abilities or capacities of this community. Through the process of sharing concerns and discussing common issues, the formation of a group (O.M.A.) may function as a first-step in the achievement of institutional completeness, in the achievement of the Muslim community to function as an organization which welcomes and attracts new immigrants. Once formed, a community in which institutional completeness exists provides a whole system of resources: religious, social, educational, economic, etc. through which more needs may be met and more concerns addressed. The presence of these resources, certainly, is a factor to consider when examining the impact of institutional completeness on Islamic identity. Without resources, the Muslim community in Ottawa could not be considered to be "institutionally complete" in any manner.

In effect, it may be accurate to conclude that institutional completeness for the

Muslim community in Ottawa must imply:

- 1) the presence of individual Islamic identity is a factor motivating the process of forming the Muslim community; and,
- 2) the presence of a capacity or ability to develop this community through the reinforcement of Islamic identity in organizations, facilities and activities in which Islamic identity is promoted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, three aspects of institutional completeness can be identified. First, new institutions are set up by individuals who had benefited from institutions in countries of origin, for instance, collected money for the mosque, people speaking the Arabic language, and an imam from Egypt etc. Second, the term "completeness" is relative, ie. to ethnic situation, where it serves first and foremost to maintain identity, and, secondarily to integrate into host society (and lose identity) in order not to provoke hostility from majority and host population. So, "completeness" cannot be "complete" and necessarily some members assimilate. Finally, completeness does not reach up to political dimension, or to the extent it does, raises group to the status of the majority (see the following chapter).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC IDENTITY

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (Qur'an 49:13)

Introduction

Muhammad established the first Islamic state in **Madinah** immediately after his migration in 622 AD. Following his death, the Prophet's companions initiated the process by which a successor to him would be chosen to act as the "head of the state." The companions were quite aware of the importance of maintaining the continuity of the Islamic state within the framework of principles left by its founder.

The crucial difference between the Islamic state and other forms of political systems was very clear in the minds of the **Sahabts**, the companions. This is evident from the nature of the title they gave to the head of state, namely, **Kalifat-Rasul-Allah**, or "successor of the Prophet." The title expressed the fact that the **Caliph** was not

equivalent to a king or emperor who holds all power in his hands and governs at will as he thinks fit. The Caliphate, according to Abd-ar-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, distinguished sociologist and historian, "is a substitute for Muhammad inasmuch as it serves like him to protect the religion and to exercise leadership."¹

The Caliphate, as a form of government peculiar to the Muslim state, continued to exist from the election of Abu Bakir in the seventh century of the Christian era, to the twentieth century, when it was abolished in Turkey in March, 1924. One question which has caused considerable argument among modern scholars is the nature of the relationship between religion and state in Islam, in other words, the connection between Islam and politics. While some may feel that enough explanations have been given on the correlation between Islam and government, belief and politics, and/or the religion and the state, a few remarks need to be made.

Unlike the political system in non-Islamic states, the objective behind establishing a government in the Islamic state is twofold, each aspect complementing the other. The Islamic state exists: 1) to establish **Al-din** (the faith); 2) to secure the interests of the ruled. As far though as the ways and means to attain these objectives, nothing is imposed. This mode conforms to the nature of all Islamic legislation which is characterized by great flexibility, making it possible to continually build up on it through the interpretation and application of its rules. In this respect, there is no difference between Islamic legislation in the political field or in any other field of human activity. If

1

Abd-ar-Rahman Ibn Khaldun. The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History. (translated by Franz Rosenthal; abridged and edited by N.J. Dawood) New York, NY: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., 1958, p. 115.

the Prophet Muhammad had established some specific system of government or had designated a person as the Caliph to succeed him, then the course of action would undoubtedly have suited the Islamic Ummah after his death and would, most probably, have remained so for some time after him. It is doubtful though whether one and the same system could have been applied to generations of Muslims in different countries where Islam had spread and where their diverse social, economic and other circumstances would have called for changes in the political system. Perhaps it was for this reason that Muhammad left the matter of choosing the ruler and the determination of the system of government to Muslims to decide according to their interests and the requirements of time, place and changing circumstances.

In contrast to the Canadian political system, the Islamic state was established upon the basis of religious, not secular law. Indeed, the Prophet had referred to the Muslims as "one Ummah" under **Dar-ul-Islam** (the house of Islam). In his reference to religious migration, in particular the migration from Mecca to Medina, where the first Islamic state was initiated, Muhammad declared that:

Actions are but by intention and every man shall have but that which he intended. Thus he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger, and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to take some woman in marriage, his migration was for that for which he migrated.²

Having briefly introduced the state system in the early Islamic period, the political aspect of Islamic identity, at least for this study, can be reduced to the following two

2

Imam an-Nawawi. An-Nawawis Forty Hadith. Translated from Arabic by E. Ibrahim and D. Johnson-Davies. Damascus, Syria: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1976, p. 26-27.

fundamental types:

- i) the **absolute**³; a kind of Islamic identity often referred to as the ideal...traditional...best type of identity, and involves the political structure (as was the case under the Caliphs), and;
- ii) the **relative**; this kind of Islamic identity, although treated as second best, can be considered⁴ as valid and authentic, particularly whenever Muslims live as a minority group (ie. the Canadian situation).

This chapter will focus on the impact of the political structure on the formation of Islamic identity and examine some of the ways identity is sustained, despite challenges, in the National Capital Region.

3

The term "absolute" should not be taken to mean, 1) that, at any time or place (except the time of the Prophet and the four caliphs after him), the Ummah has materialized and that any deviation from such a historical standard would amount to a betrayal, 2) or, short of this, that the ideal Ummah would be conceived by all Muslims exactly in the same way. We rather have in mind a social structure that seems to be the most supportive for the individual Muslim and which involves being in a majority situation, enjoying the umbrella of an ideology based on the Qur'an, living in a society where the laws are ultimately the expression of the Allah's will.

4

Excerpt from an oral communication with Dr. Syed Z. Abedin, Director of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs in the United Kingdom, during his visit to the University of Ottawa, October 10, 1991.

Islamic Identity: The Model

The impact of the political structure upon the formation of an Islamic identity and upon the maintenance of this identity in Canada is significant. According to Erik Erikson, as stated earlier in Chapter Two, identity has two main components: first, it functions as a form of personal orientation, while secondly, it functions as a means for experiencing continuity. These two components exist in the context of the five pillars, psychosocial influences, and institutional completeness, all of which have been explored in previous chapters. According to Erikson, the term "identity,"

Points to an individual's link with the unique values, fostered by a unique history, of his people. Yet also relates to the cornerstone of this individual's unique development...The term "identity" expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others.⁵

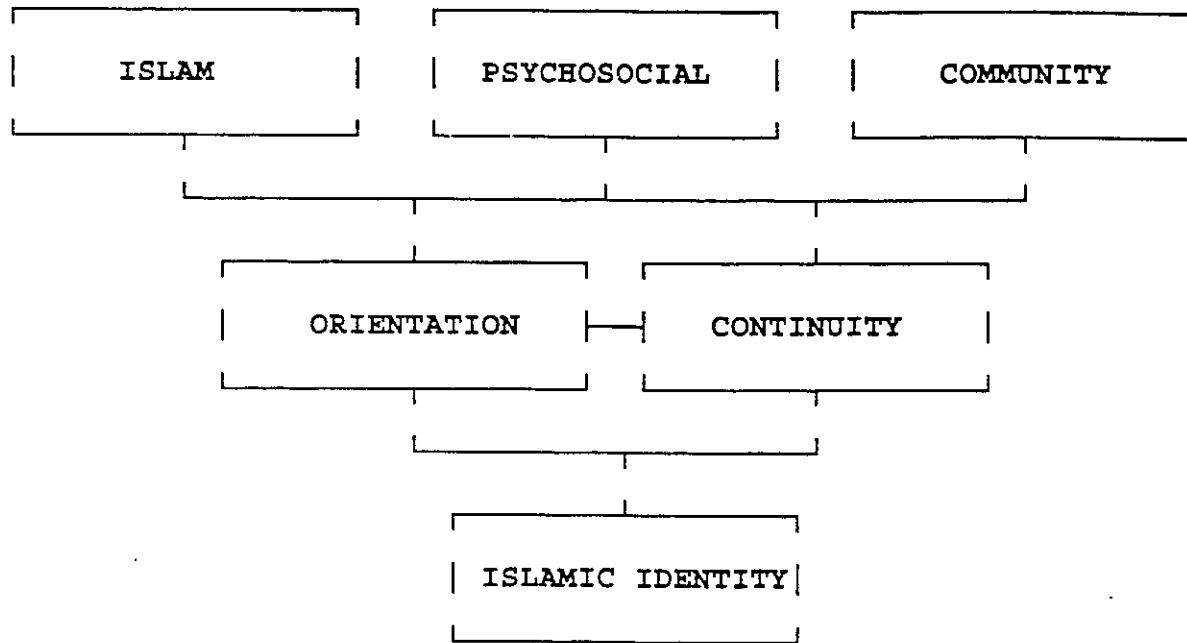
A model of Islamic identity has been generated out of this analysis. This model is based on three ingredients which have had an impact on forming and/or maintaining Islamic identity. The three ingredients or forces are: i) Islam as a religion; ii) non-Islamic society; and, iii) community organization. Erikson's concept of identity which provides a sense of continuity between the individual, the local community, and with the larger, global Muslim community (Ummah), is demonstrated by the following model.

5

Erik H. Erikson. Identity and the Life Cycle. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980, p. 109.

TABLE: 12

Formation of Islamic Identity: The Model



The Ummah: Political Analysis

How and where do the political structures of the Muslim community fit in this model? For instance, many Muslims perceive Islam as a way of life, which integrates social, economic, religious, and political systems to constitute a society. Unlike Canada Islam does not acknowledge separation between state and religion. As Yvonne Haddad, a professor of Islamic History at the University of Massachusetts, asserts:

Islamic ideology makes it clear that the state, by definition, must organize itself around the needs of the believers in order to help them maintain the

faith. And the believers in turn have the responsibility to hold the state to its task, to see that religion impacts on public policy and that society lives up to the will of God.⁶

The majority of Muslim immigrants living in the C.N.C.R. came from "so-called" Muslim countries where the pattern of their political systems was not based on Islamic law or the Shari'ah, but rather secular law. While many immigrants may adjust to and understand the Canadian political system, they often do so with some difficulty. This is not the case for Canadian-born Muslims who will find it much easier to do so. Participation in the political activities already shows proof of this fact. Affiliation with the three main political parties in Canada can be seen among members of the Muslim community in Ottawa, particularly at the time of election. Mack Harb, an MP at the federal government level, and born from a Muslim family in Lebanon, is currently supported by a vast number of Arabs in Ottawa, a high percentage of which are Muslims.

Political affiliation with the former homeland is not perceivable within the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., except among some of the most recent Muslim immigrants. The political affiliation of these Muslim immigrants is often based on a "nationalist" ideology rather than the Islamic political system. Although there is no unified Ummah in our modern time, Muslim communities exist and are found in almost every society. Once again Haddad and Lummis observe:

One of the realities of contemporary Islam of which Muslims throughout this century have become increasingly conscious is the fact that Islamic

6

Yvonne Haddad and A. Lummis. Islamic Values in the United States: A Comparative Studies. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 155.

minorities are to be found virtually all over the world.⁷

The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. and its members identify themselves by the Islamic faith. Although Islamic identity can be maintained within Canadian society which is primarily based upon Judeo-Christian values, it will be influenced by the recipient culture and values to some extent. Therefore a "relative" identity ensues. There are also other socio-psychological factors which can be in contention with Islamic identity (see chapter 2). These factors, at least for a few Muslims, might have a negative impact on the maintenance of their Islamic identity. This may also hold true for the majority of the Muslim countries, but at different levels. Indeed, strong Islamic commitment as well as "full" observance of the Islamic law and rituals are the main characteristics of some Muslims. As a minority group, Muslims who are inflexible and uncompromising in their traditional values can experience racism and discrimination from the dominant society. Dr. Earle Waugh, professor of Islam in Alberta University and co-editor of Muslim Families in North America, confirmed that:

In all, the pressures to assimilate constitute a grave issue for the Muslim immigrants, an issue of which he may not initially be aware. As a result of the hidden forces at work in North America the Muslim family may find itself in situations for which it has no preparations, and it may only vaguely comprehend the ramifications. Religious bias or racism may thus be easier to handle; a process that leaves the family weakened without an obvious source may be considered more diabolical from the perspective of the **umma's** continuation.⁸

7

Ibid. p.155.

8

Earle Waugh, "North America and the Adaptation of the Muslim Tradition: Religion, Ethnicity, and the Family." in Earle Waugh, S. Abu-Laban and R. Qureshi, ed. Muslim Families in North America. Edmonton, Alberta:

Political unrest in the Middle East and other Muslim countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia etc. may have an impact on the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. This impact was illustrated in the writing of professor Yvonne Haddad in her analysis of the effect of the Islamic revolution in Iran on the Syrian Muslims in Montreal.⁹ The recent Gulf War is also an appropriate example for investigating the degree of self-identification of the Muslim community in Ottawa. On one hand, this community can be defined as one of Canada's minority groups with regards to its citizenship, while on the other hand, it belongs to the global "Ummah." Where did Muslims in Canada stand in this conflict? Which identification was appropriate for that particular situation? Did Muslims in Canada look at the Iraqis or the Saudis as their Muslim "brothers," and if so, which side were they supposed to take in the Gulf crises? Given the absence of correlated data, these questions and hypotheses need further investigation and study, and as such will not be examined within this dissertation.

Muslim Minority: The Research Sample

Since the early Islamic period, Muslims are commanded to perform their religious obligations wherever they are on this planet. As a minority group in the National Capital

The University of Alberta Press, 1991, p. 77.

⁹
Haddad, Yvonne. "The Impact of the Islamic Revolution in Iran on the Syrian Muslims of Montreal." in The Muslim Community in North America. Earle Waugh, Abu-Laban, B. and Qureshi, R., ed. Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1983, p. 165-181.

Region and being part of the larger Ummah, these Muslims may practice their faith, in a lesser degree, since the norm of the Canadian society is not based upon the Islamic law, the Shari'ah. Respondents of the research sample expressed the significance of observing the rituals of their faith in shaping the Islamic identity. One could predict a positive correlation to exist between one's level of observance and one's level of Islamic identity. The higher an individual's level of Islamic commitment and practice, the higher his/her level of Islamic identity.

Other factors such as the social milieu in Canada may affect the level of Islamic observance (ie. the five pillars) and influence the maintenance of Islamic identity. Is Canadian society open to the practice of Islam? In response to the question, "If you were not born in Canada, where would you prefer to practice Islam?"¹⁰ individual opinions were divided. Out of 152 informants, 121 (79.6%) responded to this question, while 31 (20.3%) individuals did not respond. Approximately 40% of those who did not answer were Canadian-born Muslims, while the remaining were Muslim immigrants. Figure #22 shows that slightly over one-third of the 121 respondents preferred to practice their Islam in Canada, while the remaining two-thirds selected a Muslim country, the majority of which selected their own native country. The three most important reasons given by respondents who preferred to practice Islam in Canada were: i) the freedom of expression and faith within the Canadian society; ii) the feeling that this is my country...I grew up

10

At the time of collecting the data, this question appeared to be ambiguous, since there were two ways to interpret it: 1) if you were not born in Canada = immigrants; and, 2) supposing you were not born in Canada = Canadian-born.

here; and, iii) Canada has a lot of things to offer and you can practice Islam any where."¹¹ Three important reasons were selected from the research sample of respondents who choose their own native country or "others" to practice their faith. These reasons were: i) Islam is a way of life and it is easy to keep practising your faith; ii) I would like to live in my country...all my relatives are there; and, iii) to raise my children in an Islamic environment.¹²

¹¹

Statements selected from the research sample.

¹²

Ibid.

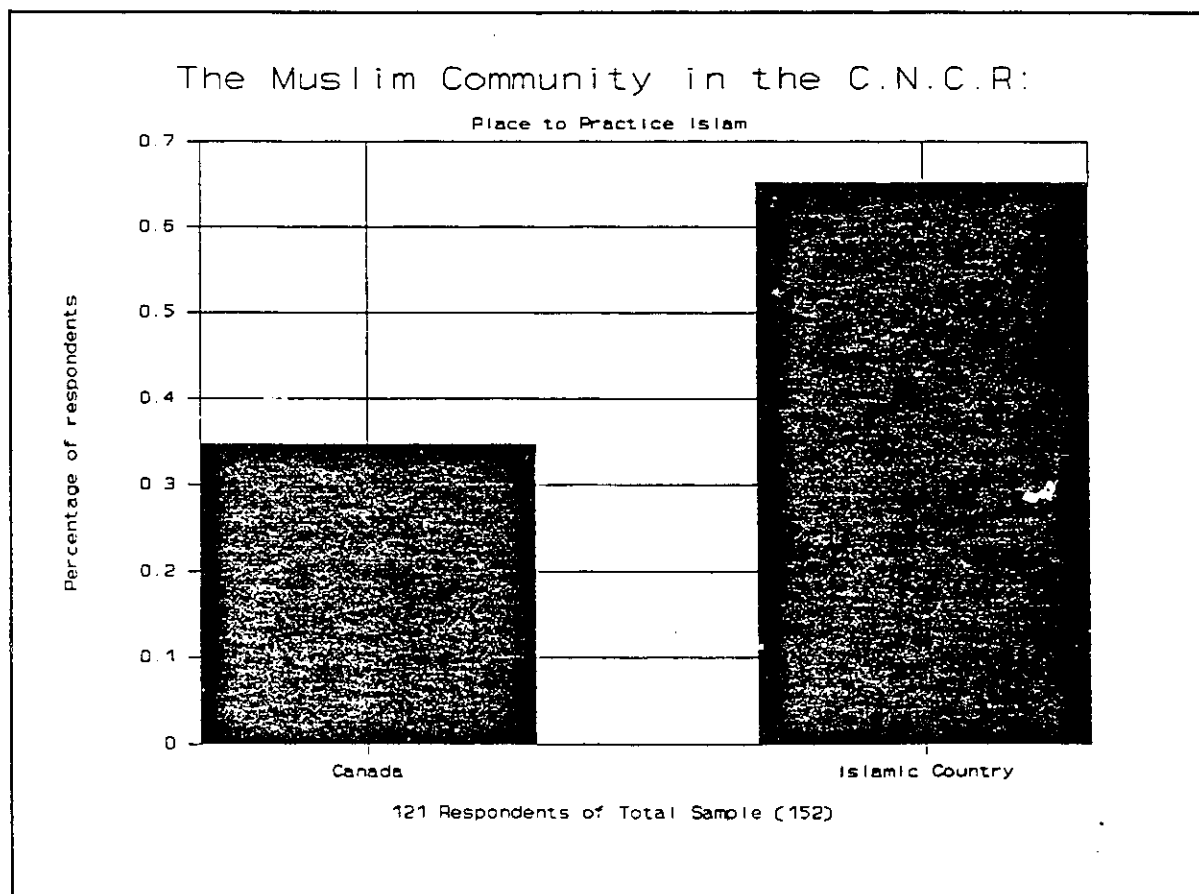


Figure 22

Although the two-thirds of the respondents within the research sample favoured an Islamic country to practice Islam, there were still a large number among them (34.7%) who chose Canada to preserve their faith. One may hypothesize that many of those who designated an Islamic country to practice Islam were either recent immigrants (15% of total sample) and/or on temporary visas (18% of total sample), such as students who have to leave Canada upon completion of their degrees.

The evaluation of Canadian social values within the research sample may be utilized to illustrate some of the political aspects of Islamic identity. The following question was raised to respondents of the research sample who lived in the National Capital

Region: As a Muslim in Canada, how do you evaluate the following? Ten values within the Canadian society were selected for the research model. These include: Canadian civil law, Canadian education, social values, freedom, sexual equality, religion in general, Muslim community, family structure, immigration law, non-Muslim relationships (see Table: 13).

TABLE: 13

Perception of Muslims on Canadian Social Values

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Respond.</u>
	%	%	%	%	No.
1. Canadian civil law:	11	53	24	12	134
2. Canadian education:	32	53	13	2	148
3. Social values:	5	20	37	38	147
4. Freedom:	23	38	19	19	149
5. Sexual equality:	5	44	29	21	146
6. Religion in general:	7	17	38	38	146
7. Muslim community:	6	22	53	19	143
8. Family structure:	6	14	40	40	145
9. Immigration law:	6	28	44	23	140
10. Non-Muslim relationships:	10	28	39	23	139
Total sample: 152					

Figure #23 ranks the ten selected social values of the Canadian society according to whether the respondents of the research sample perceived them as excellent, very good, fair, or poor. The findings show that the respondents to each of the ten categories (values) varied in terms of their level of satisfaction.

Figure #24 shows the level of satisfaction of the ten values by subjects of the research sample within the Muslim community in the Ottawa area. The level of gratification or satisfaction is demonstrated according to percentage of respondents

The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R:

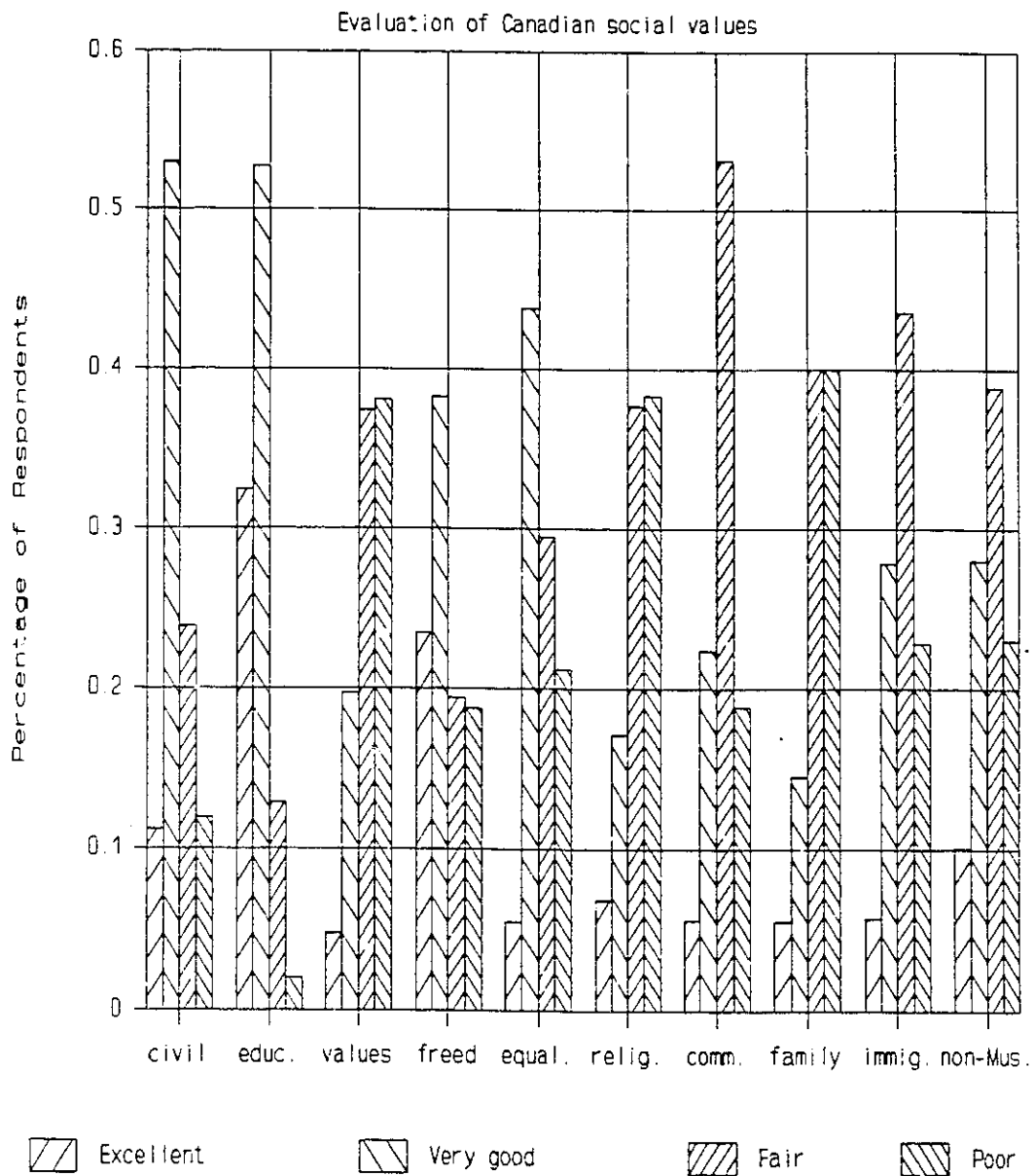


Figure 23

ranking each respective value as "excellent," or "very good." Among these values is

freedom of faith and expression which will be evaluated by respondents of the research sample shortly.

Islamic Identity: A Canadian Situation

Due to the successful adaptation of the Islamic identity in a non-Islamic society such as Canada, one can hypothesize that there is a certain level of freedom within the

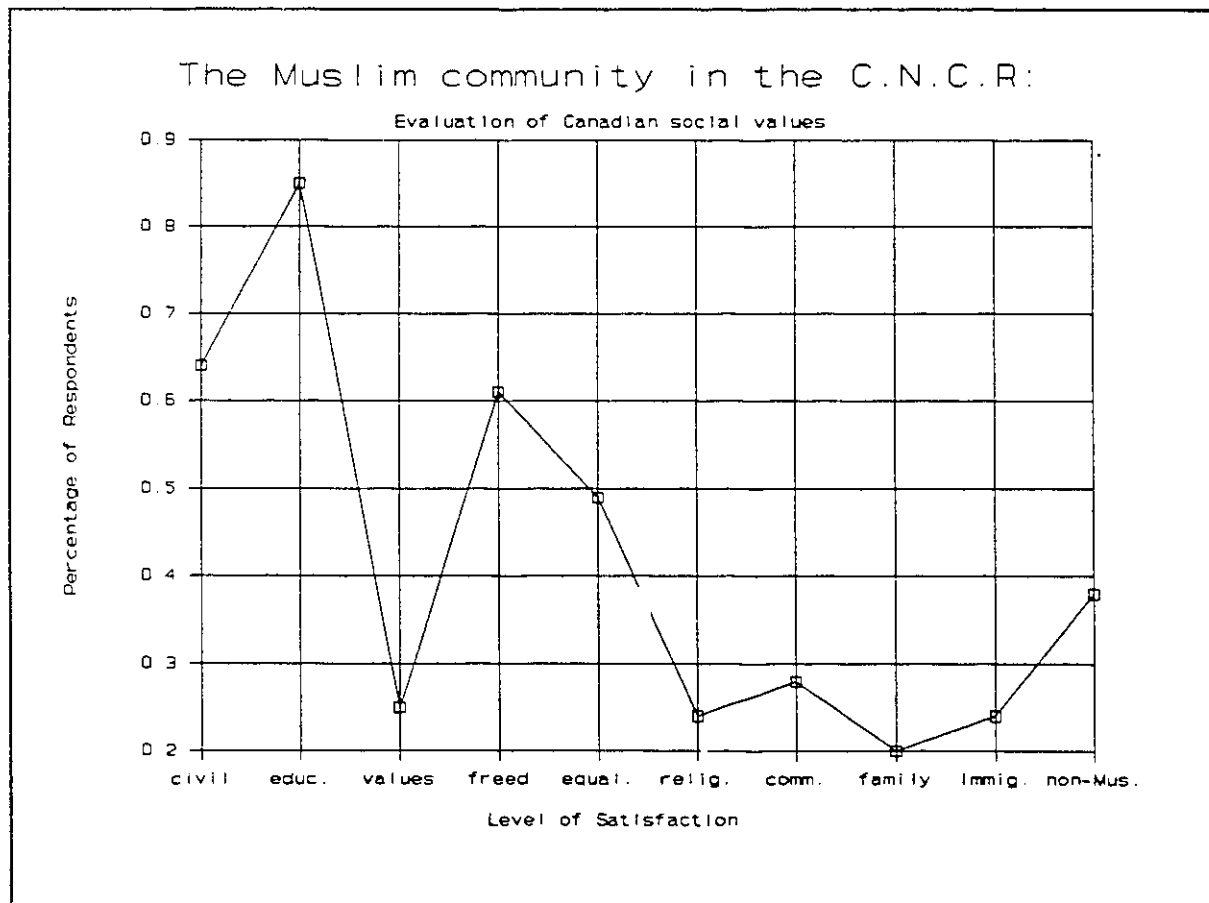


Figure 24

Canadian society. This level of freedom may accommodate the formation as well as the maintenance of Islamic identity. Did respondents of the research sample feel freedom to practice Islam (ie. fasting during Ramadan, performing the five daily prayers, Friday-noon-prayers, Id prayers, follow dietary restrictions, establishing Islamic institutions etc.) in Canada?

According to Figure #23 and Figure #24, the level of "freedom" reported by respondents in the research sample of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region had the third highest rating for the level of satisfaction among other values, with only "education" and "civil law" being higher. The level of satisfaction was measured on a scale ranging from excellent, very good, fair, to poor. Out of the 152 respondents of the research sample, 149 (98.0 %) responded to this category (freedom). Of these 149, 35 (23.4%) respondents reported "excellent", while 57 (38.2%) selected "very good" (see Figure #23). The remaining 29 (19.4%) and 28 (18.7%) of the 149 respondents in the research sample reported "fair" and "poor" respectively. If one combines the 35 (23.4%) individuals who reported "excellent" to freedom as a social value within the Canadian society with the 57 (38.2%) who reported "very good" to the same value, the findings show that more than 60% of the respondents were satisfied with the degree of freedom in Canada. It is also worth mentioning that many Muslims, particularly recent immigrants, assessed the level of freedom negatively. Many of them frequently stated that there was "too much" freedom in Canada, especially when compared with their former country.

The fact that the level of dissatisfaction with the degree of freedom within the Canadian society is only 18.7%, indicates that the majority of Muslims living in the National

Capital Region feel they have a great deal of freedom to practice their faith. Similarly, Zohra Husaini, who has done a recent socio-political study on the Muslim community of Alberta, has commented:

Canada is a unique country in the world where preservation and advancement of multiculturalism is an official governmental policy. It is Canada's ingenuity and inner security that could allow freedom of cultures and their enhancement.¹³

According to the survey findings, the level of freedom found in Canadian society helps to maintain the Islamic identity for members of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region. This freedom also facilitates these Muslims to build religious institutions (ie. mosque, full-time school, camp, etc.) where Islamic identity may be preserved in group forms. Friday-noon-prayers must be performed at the mosque, while Id prayers which captivate thousands of Muslims in the area are done at the Civic Centre in Ottawa. These events strengthen the community's solidarity and sense of belonging among its members. These forms of solidarity which have been done by religious obligation (ie. for Friday prayers, men must go to the mosque) show the level of Islamic identity within the community in the C.N.C.R.

Conclusion

Muslims who immigrate to Canada cannot hope to maintain the absolute type of

¹³

Zohra Husaini. Muslims in the Canadian Mosaic. Edmonton, Alberta: Muslim Research Foundation, 1990, p. 98.

Islamic identity, since such an identity requires living within an Islamic state. Nevertheless the Islamic tradition provides an alternative type of Islamic identity, relative although authentic, which can be achieved without the existence of Islamic state in its traditional form, on the condition of course that the political situation allows for it. This is the case in Canada where freedom of religion is a basic right and where there is, at the federal level, an official multicultural policy.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study show clearly that Islamic identity in the National Capital Region is constructed of at least four different ingredients:

- 1) Islam as a religion which involves a personal system of faith and belief as well as a pattern of observance;
- 2) Psychosocial influences, in particular, those which are experienced by Muslims living in the non-Muslim society of the National Capital Region;
- 3) Community organization, or a system of institutional completeness which provides, for example, adequate resources to meet the needs of the Muslim population living in the Ottawa area; and,
- 4) Political situation, which enables Muslims to maintain their Islamic identity, in a traditional, though relative manner.

These four ingredients seem to be both inter-dependent and inter-related. Islam as a religion, for example, forms the basis for a personal orientation which, in turn, leads a Muslim toward a sense of continuity with both the past (history) and with a local and a global community (Ummah). The Muslim participates in Islam through its practical aspect, specifically, through a pattern of observances. This pattern may include prayers, fasting and charity. It is through this participation that the Muslim enters into community

with others who also participate in Islam through similar patterns of observances. Community organization provides cohesion, solidarity and self-sufficiency among Muslims who share a single religion, the same beliefs and patterns of observances, and a series of needs which they have in common. If it were not for the resources provided for by the Muslim community, however, the Muslim's participation in Islam might be limited to a very personal form of worship. It is through the availability of the mosque, various educational facilities, and the Ottawa Muslim Association that the individual is provided with many opportunities to become involved with other Muslims. The political structure in Canada has an important impact on the maintenance and the formation of Islamic identity. Muslims in Canada practice their faith in a lesser degree than if they were governed by an Islamic state, since the norms of the Canadian society are not based upon the Islamic law. Consequently, Islamic identity in non-Islamic society, at least within the research sample, has been shown to be maintained in a "relative" manner.

The level of importance assigned to twelve problems by respondents of the research sample (in chapter 2) shows how members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. adapt to non-Islamic society while maintaining their Islamic identity. For Muslims in the Ottawa area, fear of losing identity and faith, and media stereotyping of Islam and Muslims, which can be a product of racism and discrimination, may add another pressure to activate a healthy process of adaptation into Canadian society. Mixed marriages and the problem of being accepted by Canadians often accelerate the process of assimilation of minority groups, which is in keeping with Canada's Multicultural policy and ethics.

The twelve particular socio-psychological problems which have been presented

through this dissertation distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims in the C.N.C.R. Length of residency in the National Capital Region can be a factor which affects how these problems are viewed and resolved by Muslims living in the Ottawa area. The Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. has established certain Islamic institutions to facilitate its members resist outside pressure and try to retain them within the community boundaries.

Religious observance as well as institutional completeness both interact with socio-psychological factors in order to shape the Islamic identity. The socio-psychological influences appear to have an impact on the Islamic identity in four ways: they might cause an erosion of the attributes which differentiate Muslims from non-Muslims; they might reinforce the attributes which differentiate Muslims from non-Muslims (ie. might make one a better Muslim); the process of adaptation, assimilation may depend on how problems are perceived and/or resolved by individuals, one may be forced to change one's outlook or even name because of the way one perceives these problems, or fail to resolve them, one way to resolve problems is to accept them; and, may exert stresses on the individual - may affect one's sense of security and autonomy, affects family, community, self.

When a Muslim moves to or is born in non-Islamic society such as Canada, is it possible to maintain and or form an Islamic identity? This study has shown that **the Muslim community has been capable of maintaining an Islamic identity in the National Capital Region, while adapting to the Canadian society.** Due to the confrontation between Islamic and Canadian values, which has been examined through the research sample of the Muslim community in the Ottawa area, Islamic identity has been maintained and in some cases re-evaluated. Indeed, socio-psychological factors,

in particular, those which are experienced by Muslims living in the non-Muslim society of the National Capital Region influence the Islamic identity. But, the Muslim community in the Ottawa area exhibits a very consistent process of adaptation into Canadian society while maintaining its Islamic identity. Likewise the ways situations are perceived and problems are resolved, the individual's formal affiliations with the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. are also important factor which influence the formation of Islamic identity. Part of these affiliations involve the individual's interactions with different social and religious organizations through which the ethnic and cultural interests of the individual are represented, preserved and sustained.

Community organization, or a system of institutional completeness which provides, for example, adequate resources to meet the needs of the Muslim population living in the Ottawa area is an essential factor for maintaining the Islamic identity. These institutions must equip members of the Muslim community and attract them into its territory. Through the reinforcement of Islamic identity in organizations, facilities and activities Islamic identity is promoted. With the participation of the four ingredients, Islam, socio-psychological factors, community institutions, and political situation, Islamic identity definitely can be maintained in the Canadian National Capital Region. These four forces affect the formation of Islamic identity and its maintenance, while they are inter-dependent and interactive with each other.

In summary, this thesis has confirmed the differential impact of the four forces, the five pillars, psychosocial influences, community organization, and political aspects in order to shape the Islamic identity in a non-Islamic society.

On the basis of this study it appears that the Muslim community in the National Capital Region has adopted the Canadian social values while maintaining Islamic identity. In view of the fact that Muslims living in Ottawa have not experienced any legal discrimination, with respect to their religion, they appear to be considerably free to practice Islam and preserve what Breton has called Institutional Completeness.

The maintenance of Islamic identity in Canada, can be regarded as second best or "relative" in comparison with the more traditional or "absolute" identity. Due to the level of freedom, the multicultural policy, and the separation of religion from the state, it is possible for Muslims to practice their religion and maintain their Islamic identity in Canada. Canadian-born Muslims as well as their immigrant ancestors can maintain their Islamic identity, but perhaps to different extent.

To what extent Muslims can maintain the Islamic identity with its unique religio-ethnic characteristics, and for how long, is extremely difficult to anticipate. However, when looking at the exceptionally small number of Muslims who live in Ottawa and practice their faith, it would appear that Islamic identity might have continuity over time. Perhaps further research will dwell on this issue and might clarify the degree of Islamic identity which an individual can maintain in Canada with respect to how long it will survive.

With respect to the research sample of this study, three groups emerge through the analysis of the data. These groups were classified on the basis of respondent's level of religious observance and sense of Islamic identity. Classification of these groups appear to be the following:

Group A: This group represents the members of the community who appear to be the most "committed" Muslims among the rest of the community. Persons within Group A are considered to possess a strong sense of Islamic identity. Group A is comprised mostly of Muslim immigrants to Canada. Among subjects in Group A, Canadian-born or second generation Muslims were also identified. This group as a whole reports a strong sense of Islamic identity, and bases its sense of identity upon a "high level of commitment." Within this group, two sub-groups, Muslim students and recent converts to Islam, were identified. Group A comprises a minority of the research subjects. Based on data derived from the research sample of the Muslim community in the National Capital Region, this group represents 21% of the sample.

Group B: This group represents the members of the community who appear to be "less-committed" Muslims. Persons within Group B are considered to possess a moderate sense of Islamic identity. This group attempts mainly to adjust to Canadian social values and interprets the Islamic law in a way that will make them comfortable in their search for accommodating social values within Canadian society. This group composes the absolute majority population of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. Based on data derived from the research sample, this group represents 73% of the sample. Among Group B, immigrants, second generation, converts and students were identified.

Group C: In comparison with Group A and Group B, members of this group can be classified as "non-committed" Muslims, and appear to possess a low level of Islamic

identity. Based on the data derived from the research sample of the Muslim community in the Ottawa area, this group represents 6% of the sample. This group is not visible among other group members of the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R. It is possible that members of Group C do not want to identify themselves with the Muslim community. Group C is comprised of immigrants, first generation, converts and students. A complete process of assimilation is expected to take place among the members of this group, but it might take a short or a long period of time.

In brief, what has been examined throughout this thesis might be recapitulated on the following points:

1. As an ethnic minority group, Muslim immigrants came to the National Capital Region of Canada fairly recently. The community is formed primarily of Muslim immigrants (87%) and Canadian-born Muslims represent only 13% of the sample population (152).
2. Like other minority groups in Canada, the Muslim community in the Ottawa area faces the dilemma of assimilation / ghettoization. To maintain one's initial identity without any change or adaptation results in a ghetto situation. Conversely, to seek complete and smooth adaptation to the host culture paves the way to assimilation. It appears that the Muslim community of Ottawa is steering a middle course between Charybdis and Scylla.
3. Judging by the five pillars, Islamic identity is preserved primarily by "committed"

Muslims (21%), secondarily by "less-committed" (73%), and barely by individuals who rate as "non-committed" (6%). Will the same preservation of identity be maintained with the second, third, etc. generations of Canadian-born Muslims? And, if so, for how long?

4. Judging by lifestyles and psychosocial influences two scenarios can be envisaged: **optimistic**, that is, seeing no problems, Muslims here appear to solve them; **pessimistic**, Muslims see no problem because they are not faithful enough to perceive the difficulties encountered in Canada. The optimistic scenario appears to be the appropriate one.
5. Judging by institutional completeness, the situation is favourable as much as it can be (ie. mosque, schools, associations). Of course, interpretation of the term "completeness" is per se very relative.
6. Judging by the political situation, Canada, in a limited sense, appears to be suitable for Muslims, even though it is not an Islamic state, on the condition that Muslims accept to live in a minority situation.
7. When the Islamic bond weakens between the diverse nationalities (Pakistani, Lebanese, Egyptian, Somalian, etc...), and this phenomenon is to be foreseen in a secularized context, then the identity of the community should also weaken.
8. Since this study is a pioneer exploration, then it is desirable that some of its

findings be compared eventually to other Muslim communities in North America, especially in Canada.

9. As shown by our sociological inquiry, the Muslim community in the National Capital Region maintains its identity through the preservation of religious rituals, experiences psychosocial influences, enjoys a degree of institutional completeness, and accepts the political situation in Canada.

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APPENDIX: A

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

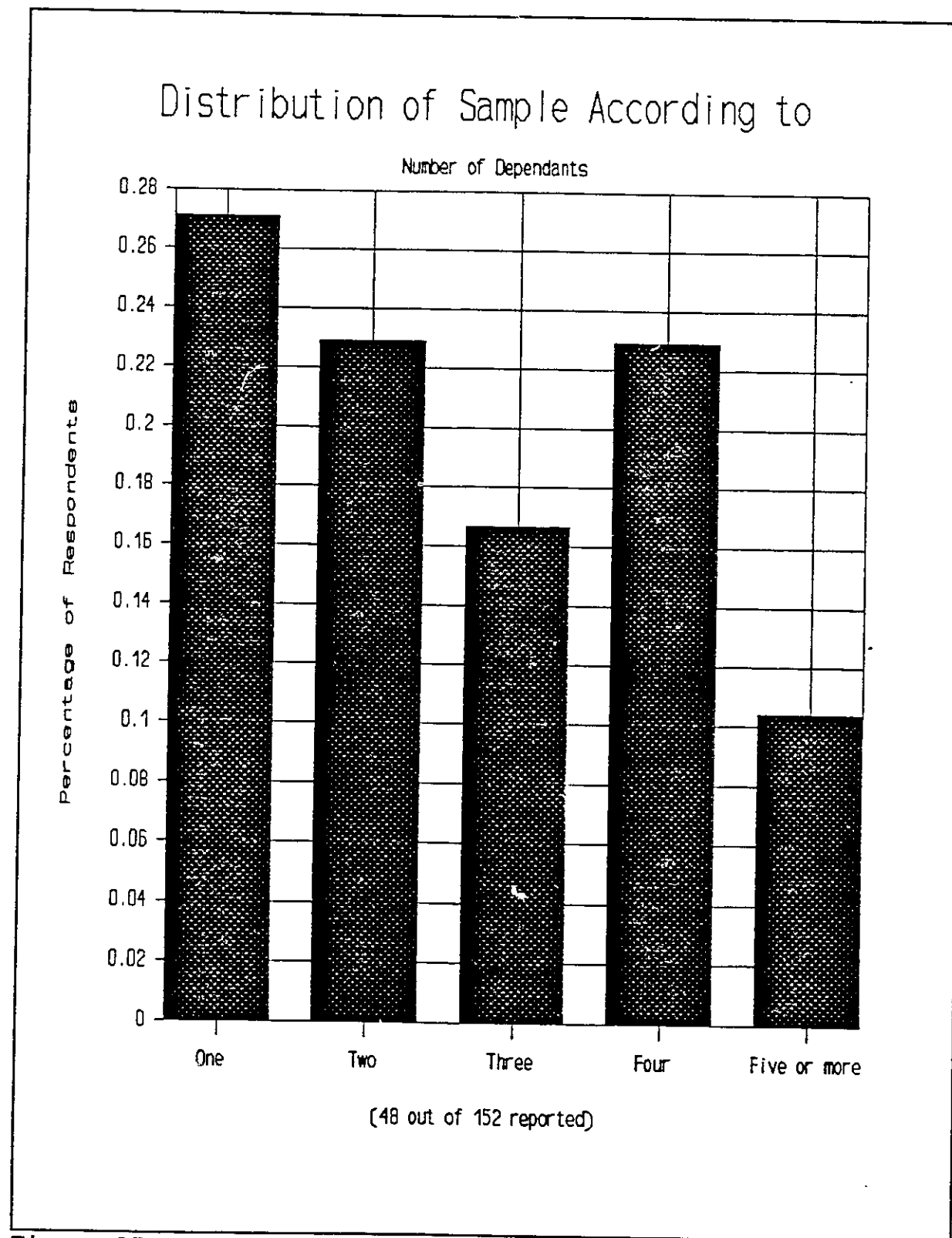


Figure 25

Table 13: Distribution of Sample According to
Age

Age	Respondents	%
24 years or less.....	35	25.5
Between 25 to 29 years.....	35	25.5
Between 30 to 34 years.....	24	17.5
Between 35 to 39 years.....	12	8.7
Between 40 to 44 years.....	14	10.2
Between 45 to 49 years.....	7	5.1
Between 50 to 54 years.....	5	3.6
Between 55 to 59 years.....	1	0.7
60 years and above.....	4	2.9

Total.....	137	99.07
------------	-----	-------

Total Sample: 152; Resp.: 137 (90.1%); No Report: 15 (9.8%)

Distribution of Sample According to

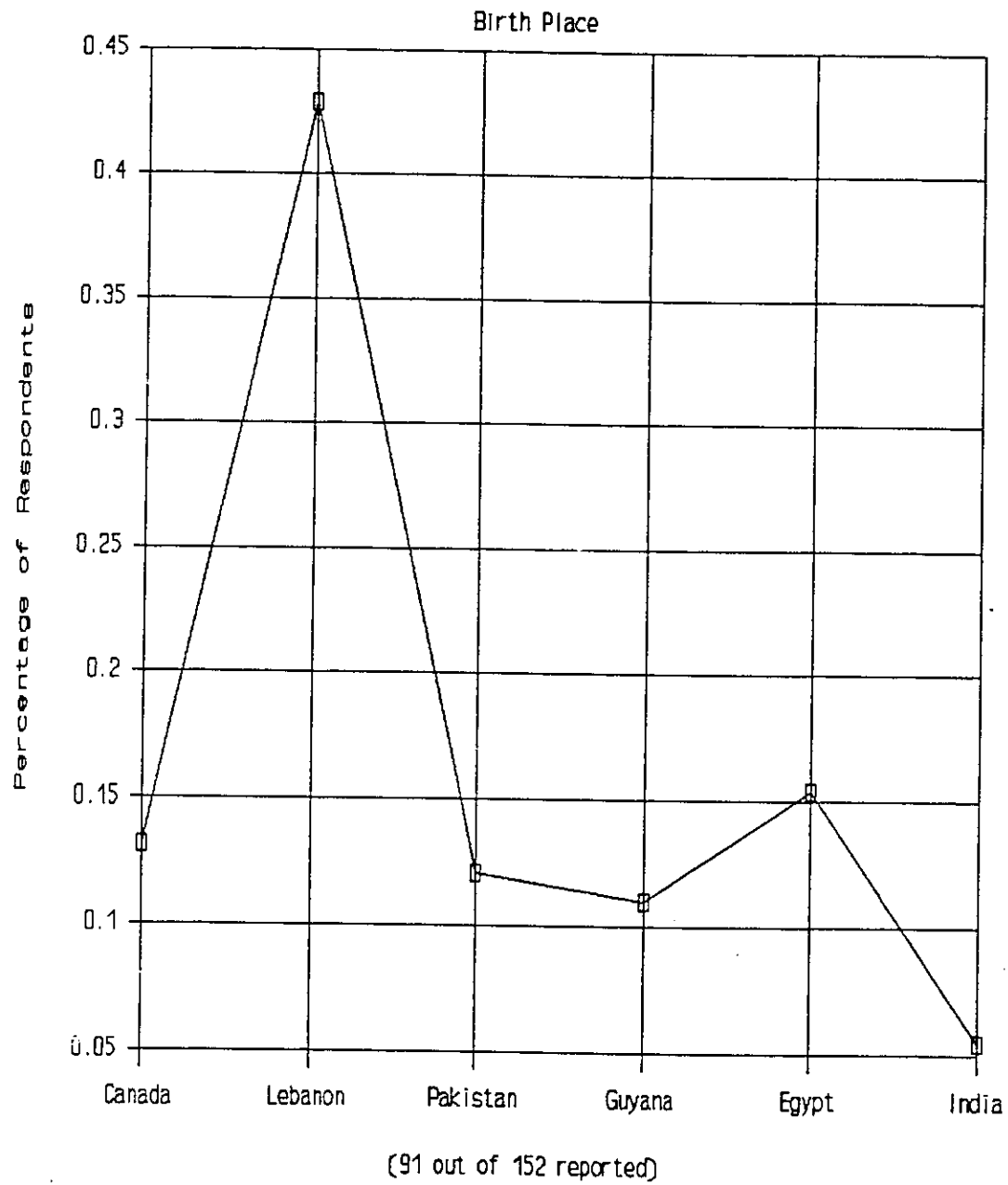


Figure 26

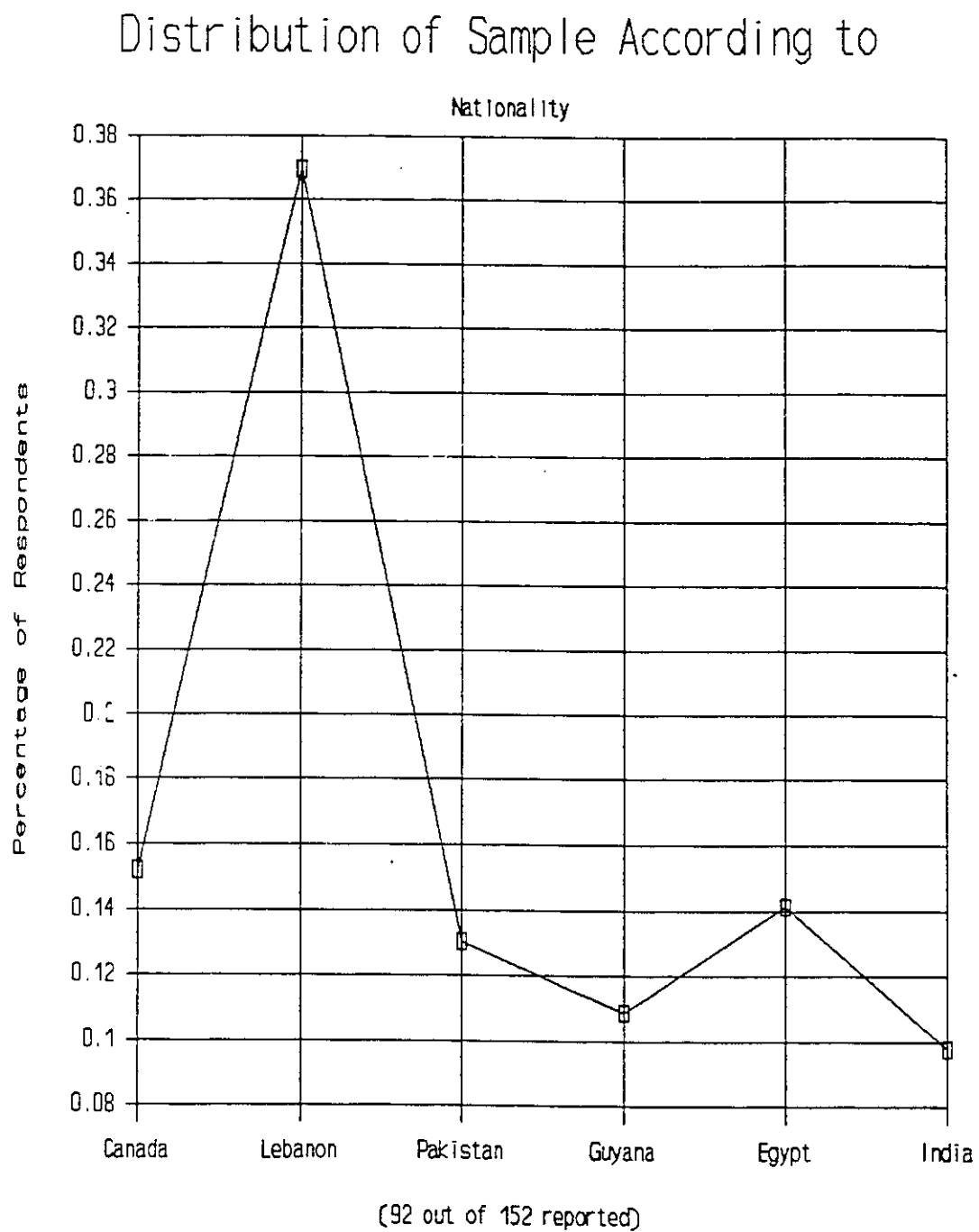


Figure 27

Distribution of Sample According to

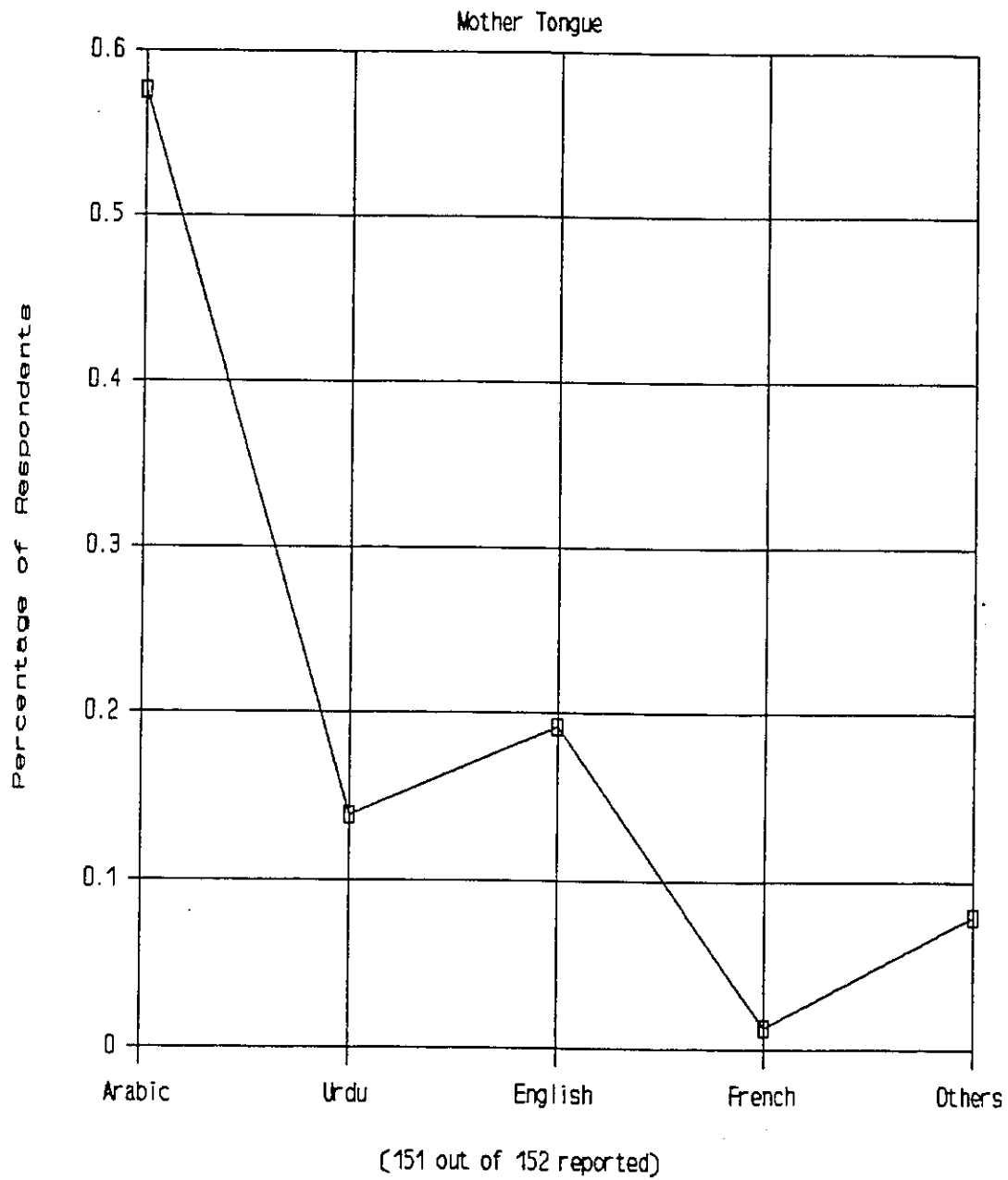


Figure 28

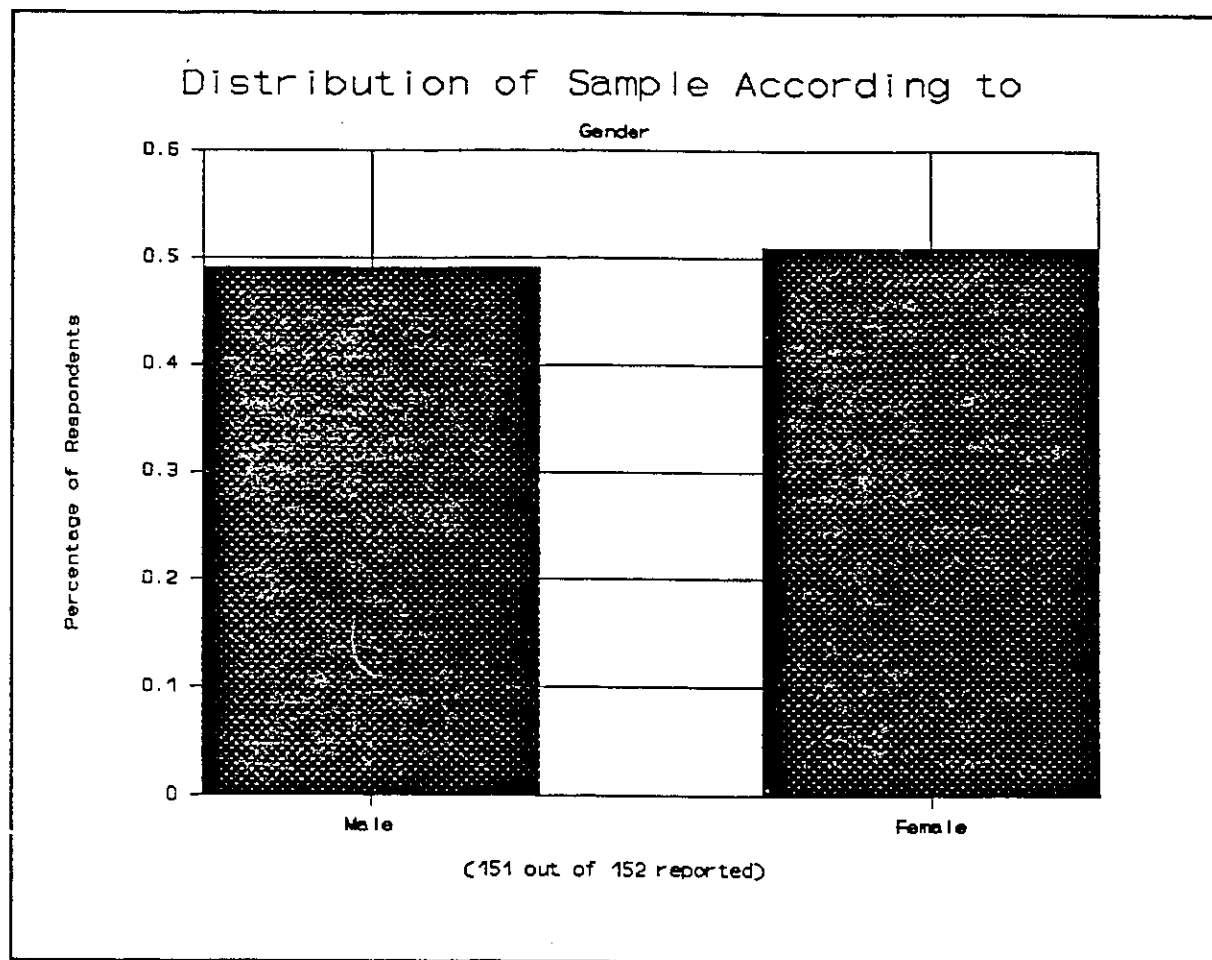


Figure 29

Distribution of Sample According to

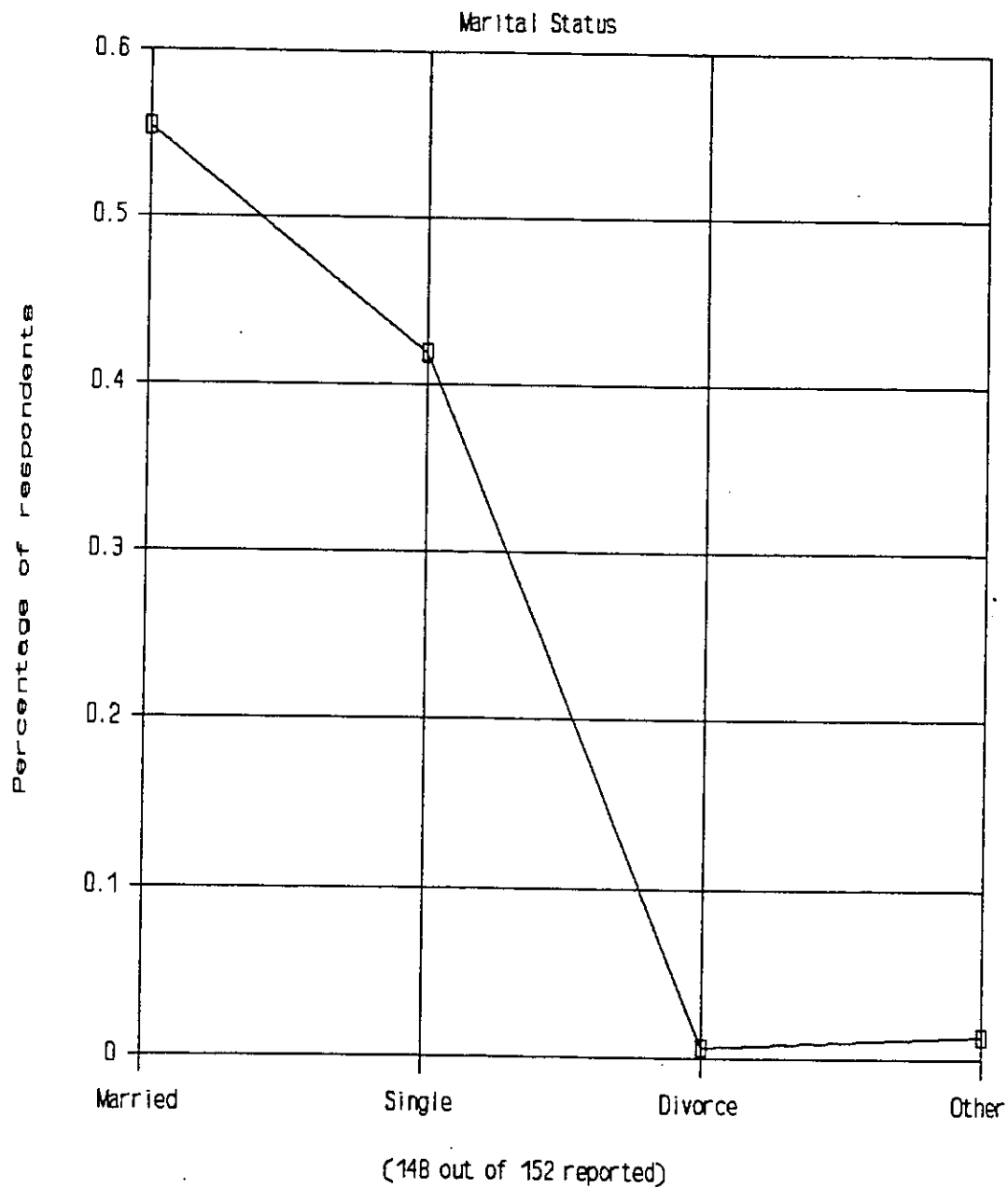


Figure 30

Table 14: Distribution of Sample According to Income Level				
Income	Respondents	%	Spouse	%
Less than \$10,000.....	0	0	0	0
Between \$10,000 and 15,000.....	13	22.8	5	29.4
Between \$15,000 and 20,000.....	5	8.7	2	11.7
Between \$20,000 and 30,000.....	15	26.3	3	17.6
Between \$30,000 and 40,000.....	9	15.7	3	17.6
Above \$40,000.....	15	26.3	4	23.5
Total.....	57	99.8	17	99.8
Total Sample: 152; Resp.: 74 (48.6%); No Report: 78 (51.3%)				

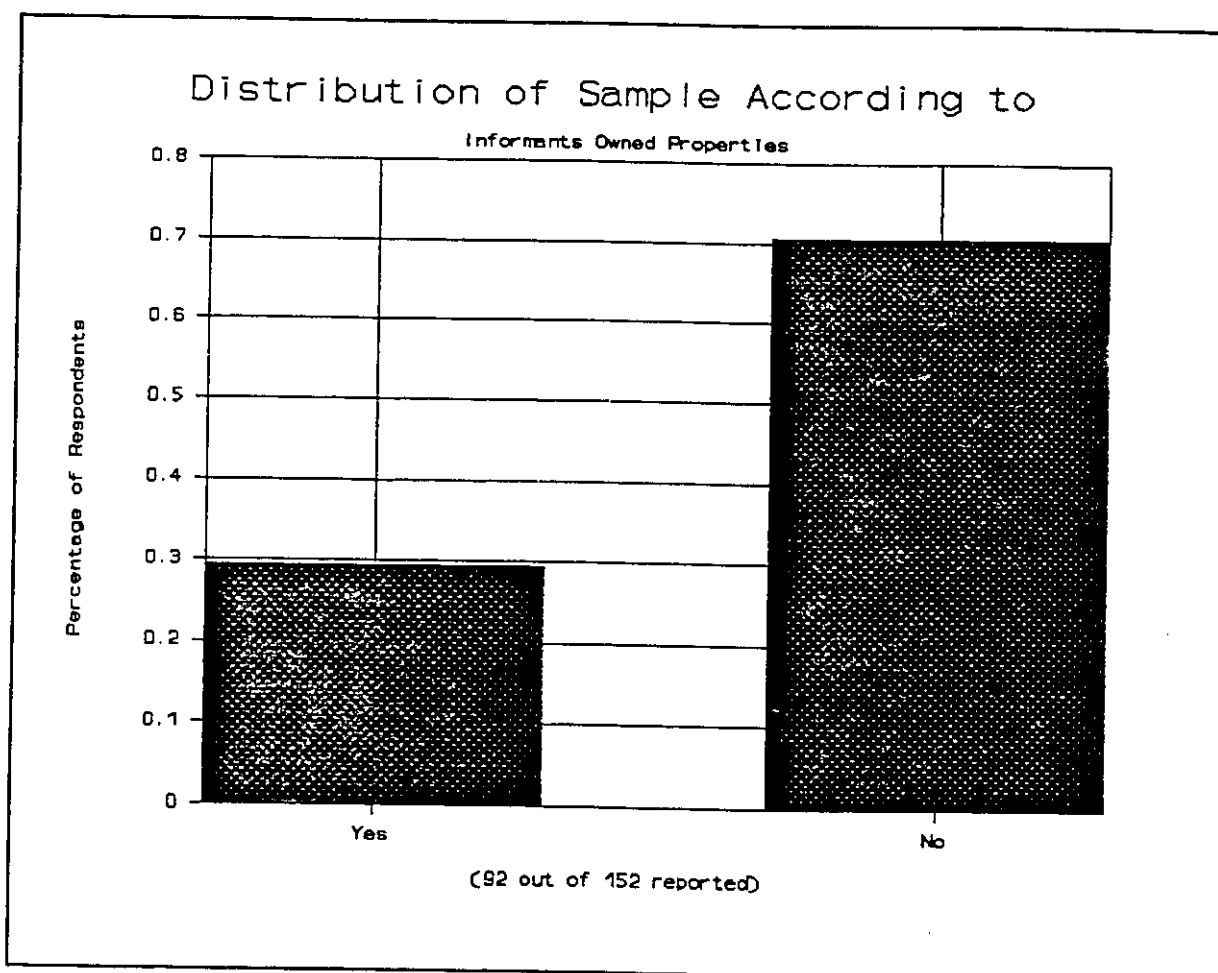


Figure 31

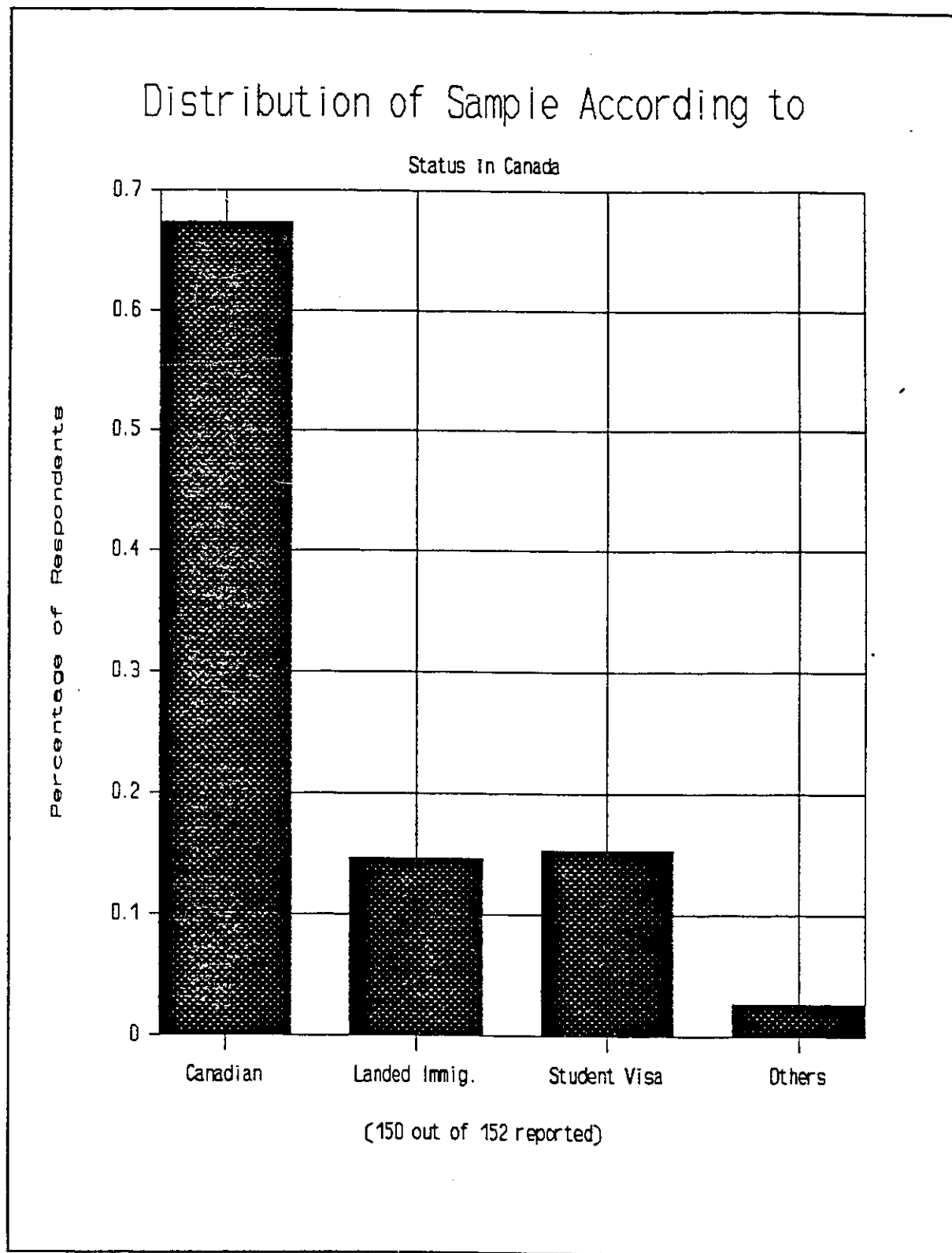


Figure 32

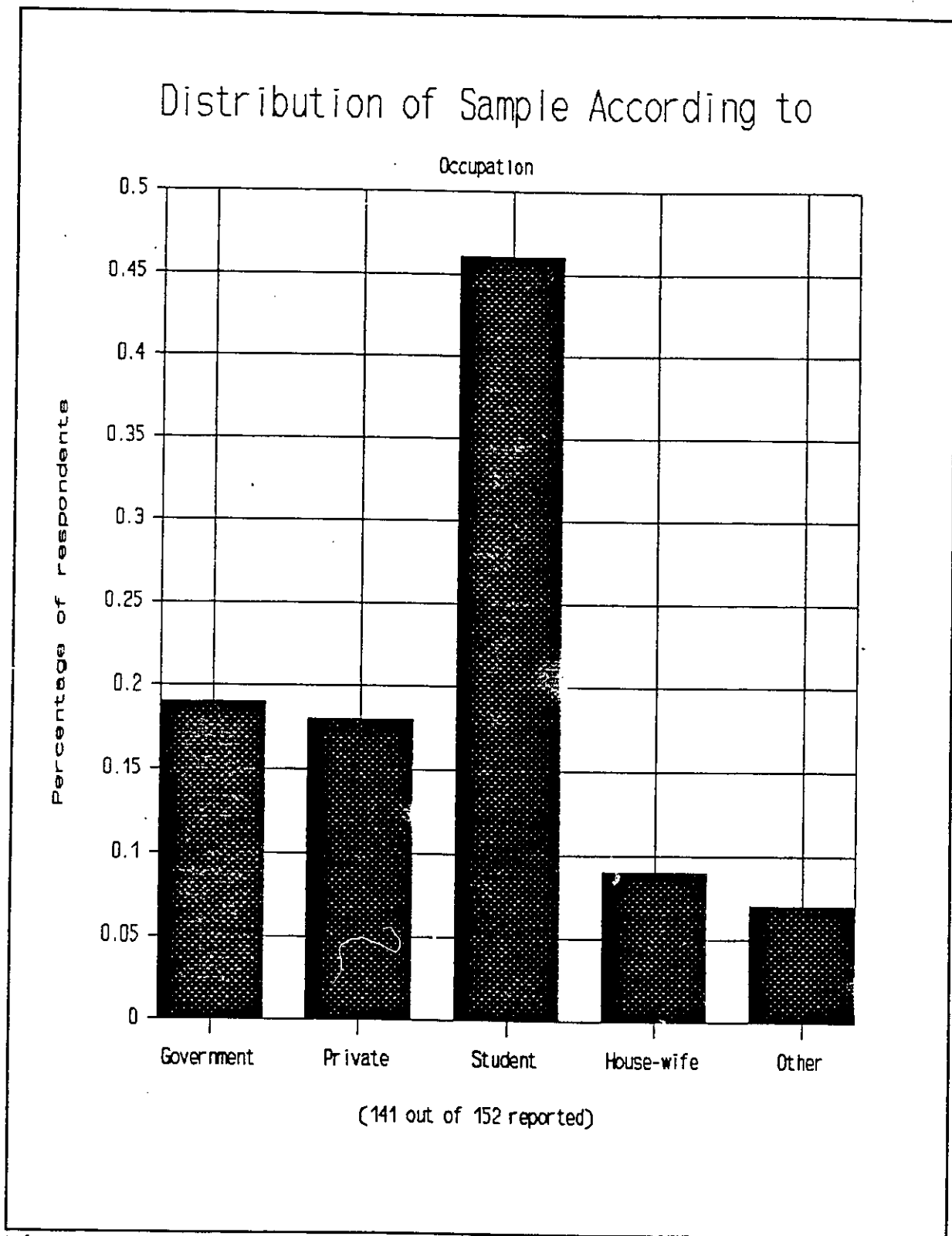


Figure 33

Distribution of Sample According to

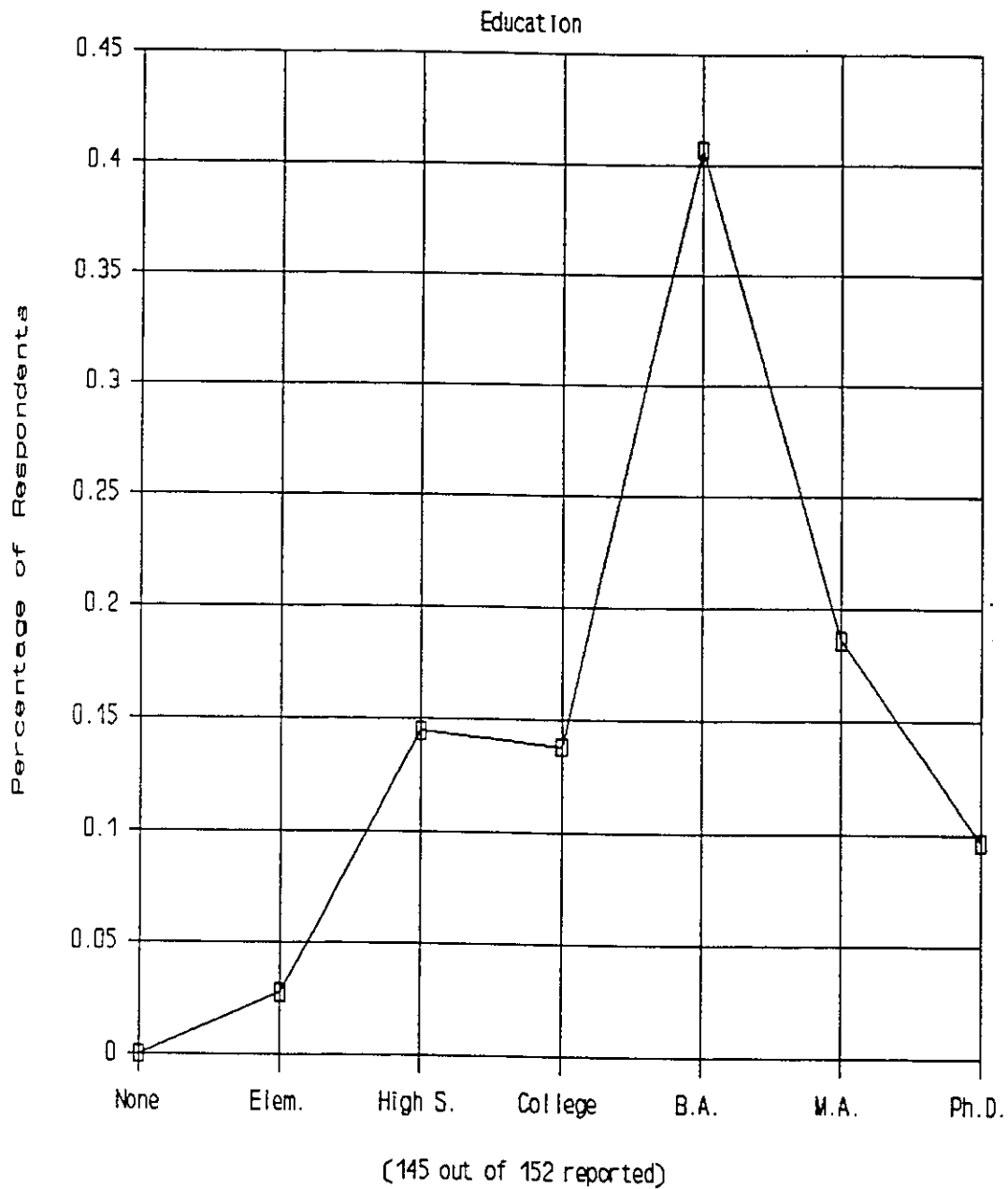


Figure 34

Table 15: Distribution of Sample According to Years of
Residency in Canada

Number of Years		
Lived in Canada	Redpondents	%
Less than 3 years.....	19	14.3
Between 3 to 6 years.....	23	17.4
Between 6 to 9 years.....	14	10.6
Over 9 years.....	76	57.5
Total.....	132	99.8
Total Sample: 152; Resp.: 132 (86.8%); No Report: 20 (13.1%)		

Community Sub-groups:

Immigrants: Most Muslim immigrants in the C.N.C.R. have been come to this country from Asia and Africa. Out of 149 respondents, 83 person who reported their nationalities were Arabic-speaking Muslim immigrants (mostly Lebanese), while 42 persons came from Indo-Pakistani background. Throughout the stages of the research, the writer felt that Muslim immigrant males identified themselves with Canadian nationality, but not female immigrants who strongly affiliated with their former nationalities.

With regard to the Muslim community in the C.N.C.R., the adoption of the culture and values of a new society is essential in the integration of the immigrant group and could result in a significant reduction of racism and discrimination towards that particular group. However, there exists the fear of losing the original culture and values, which are an essential part of an individual's own identity. Among the important values are those of the Islamic faith. Practice involves praying five times a day, including Friday-noon-prayer in the mosque, fasting during the month of Ramadan, almsgiving, pilgrimage to Mecca, and dietary restrictions etc., all of which often govern the practice of everyday life, cultural goals, and political and economic perceptions. The Arab Muslims, for instance, came to Canada with their cultural and religious ethos. Although they established their community, the question remains as to how they have integrated and adapted to a non-Islamic society and its values in terms of their Islamic identity.

When asked if they practiced Islam before their immigration period, 100 (65.7%)

Muslim immigrants in the C.N.C.R. reported yes 21 (13.8%) reported sometimes 16 (10.5%) reported no and 15 (9.8%) did not report. Concerning their level of religious observance, among the 121 persons who answered yes or sometimes to the question, approximately one-fifth rated themselves highly observant, one-half rated an average level of observance, another one-fifth rated a fair level of observance, about 5% rated a low level of observance, and 5 (4.1%) persons did not report.

Canadian-born or first generation Muslims: represented 14 (9.2%) of the research sample. They differed in their ethnic backgrounds, but grew up with Islamic-Canadian social values. It is possible that this group experienced the processes of acculturation and / or assimilation differently than the immigrant group within Canadian society. Yet, this group may experience some difficulties building as well as maintaining their Islamic identity. One fact that may be anticipated is the manner Canadian-born Muslims develop methods to transfer Islamic identity to the next generation without losing its essence.

With regard to level of Islamic identity reported by first generation Muslims in the C.N.C.R., strong, moderate, and low levels were indicated in the research.

The converts to Islam: represented the members of the community who, most likely, converted to Islam through marriage. Of the 80 (52.6%) respondents who answered the question, 10 (12.5%) said that their spouses were converts to Islam. This figure accounts for all of the converts (6.5%) to Islam in the research sample. While they enter Islam with their own free-will, they face the long road between the church and the mosque, or the transition process. The degree of acceptance expressed by both the Muslim community and Canadian society might be an important factor which influences

the religious identity of the convert to Islam.

The students: Unlike other groups in the research sample, the 65 members (42.8%) of this group are students at colleges or universities. Among this group, 23 (35.3%) are in Canada on student visas. Their status in Canada is based on a temporary period of time, so they express a somewhat different perspective towards Canadian social values and also a distinct level of Islamic identity. If these students want to remain in Canada as immigrants, they require a period of time in order to adapt Canadian social values. However, this process of adaptation does not necessarily mean that students will "lose" their Islamic identity. 42 (64.6%) students within this group reported either Canadian citizenship or landed immigrant status.

APPENDIX: B

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

FACULTÉ DES ARTS
FACULTY OF ARTS

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN CANADA: A CASE STUDY OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN

OTTAWA, 1982-1987

Completed Questionnaire Number -----

CONFIDENTIAL

Ph. D. Thesis Project

By

Ahmad F. Yousif

Department of Religious Studies

University of Ottawa

Ottawa, Canada

1988

SCIENCES RELIGIEUSES/RELIGIOUS STUDIES

177 WALLER, OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA K1N 6N5

YOU CAN WRITE YOUR ANSWER IN ARABIC OR ENGLISH

PERSONAL DATA

1Surname	1Given name	1Dependants	1
1	1	1	1
1Date of Birth	1Birth Place	1Nationality	1Mother Tongue
1	1	1	1
1Permanent Address:			1
1			1Tel.()1
1Sex	1Marital Status		1
1M--F--1Single-- Married-- Other(specify)-----			1
1Annual Income			1Owned Properties
1Spouse's Income			1
1Can.\$-----1Yes--- No---			1Can.\$-----
1Status in Canada:			1
1Canadian-- Landed Immig.-- Other(specify)-----			1
1Occupation:			1
1Government-- Private-- Other(specify)-----			1
1Education:None-- Elementary-- High School-- College--			1
1University-- Ph.D-- M.A-- B.A--; In-----			1
1How long have you been in Canada? Years--- Months---			1

QUESTIONS

1. In general, how do you feel about this society (non-Islamic society)?

Do you like or dislike it as a place to live?

___Like ___Neutral ___Dislike

Additional comments by respondent _____

2. Why did you come to Canada?

☐ I was born in Canada.

☐ Because there are better job opportunities.

☐ Because I have relatives here.

☐ Because the Canadian immigration laws are flexible.

☐ For political reasons

☐ Because I wanted to get a good education.

☐ Because I wanted to live in a free society.

☐ Other (specify) _____

3. Did you practice Islam before you came to Canada?

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No

If yes, how do you rate your level of religious observance at that time?

☐ High(85-100%) ☐ Average(65-84%) ☐ Fair(50-64%) ☐ Low(below 50%)

4. Have you been a member of one of the Muslim Associations in this city for the last 5 years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify which one; ☐ O.M.A ☐ M.S.A ☐ M.Y.O ☐ O.M.W.A

5. Do you know that there is a mosque in Ottawa?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how often do you go to the mosque?

☐ Daily ☐ Weekly ☐ 2-3 times/month ☐ 3-5 times/year ☐ Never

6. Have you been attending Friday prayer regularly?

☐ Yes (almost never miss) ☐ Sometimes (twice a month) ☐ No

If yes, where? ☐ Mosque ☐ O.U ☐ C.U. ☐ Other (specify) _____

7. Evaluate the importance of the following activities for your identity as a Muslim;

	<u>Not important</u>		<u>Very important</u>		
<u> </u> Praying 5 times a day -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Reciting the Qur'an -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Paying Zakat -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Wearing Islamic dress (female) -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Attending Islamic lectures -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Performing Id prayers -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Attending Imam's lecture on Sundays--	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Joining community activities -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Participating in Family Night -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Using Arabic language at home -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Sending my children to summer camp --	1	2	3	4	5
<u> </u> Living in a Muslim country -----	1	2	3	4	5

8. Do you fast during Ramadan? Yes Sometimes Not here Never

If the answer is NOT yes, please give three important reasons

 No one in my family fasts

 I have physical problems

 Being a good Muslim for one month only is not worth it

 I have too much work, studies, etc...

 I feel that the whole society is against me

 Days in Canada are too long

 I have no idea when Rama'an is

 I never fasted before

 Other (specify) _____

9. Do you practice your prayers? Yes Sometimes No

If yes, how often? (excluding Friday and Id prayers)

☐ 5 times a day ☐ Once a day ☐ 1-5 times a month ☐ A few times a year

10. Have you ever been to Mecca? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, from Canada? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. If somebody asks you a question concerning your faith, where would you find an answer? Please mark ONE answer.

☐ Ask the Imam

☐ I have the knowledge to answer

☐ Ask a fellow Muslim

☐ Read the Qur'an and other sources

☐ I just tell the person "I don't know"

☐ Other (specify) _____

12. How do you rate your knowledge of Islam at present?

☐ High(85-100%) ☐ Average(65-84%) ☐ Fair(50-64%) ☐ Poor(below 50%)

If high or average, where did you learn the most about Islam?

☐ In Canada ☐ Else where (specify) _____

If fair or poor, indicate the importance of the following ways of strengthening your Islamic education.

	<u>Not Important</u>		<u>Very Important</u>		
☐ Basic Islamic teaching (salah, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
☐ The Qur'an -----	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Hadith and Sunnah -----	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Building another mosque -----	1	2	3	4	5
☐ An Islamic library -----	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Islamic Shariah -----	1	2	3	4	5
☐ Islamic history -----	1	2	3	4	5

<u>Art of Da'wah</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>The Islamic revivalist movement</u> ----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>The biography of the Prophet</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Islam as a way of life</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Islamic scholars</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>A full-time Islamic school</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Going to an Islamic country</u> -----	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Other (specify)</u> _____					

13. Do you send your children to an Islamic school?

Yes No

If yes, where? _____

If no, why? _____

14. Have you visited Muslim friends since you arrived in Ottawa?

Yes No

If yes, how often? Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly

15. What is your spouse's religion?

Muslim Christian Converted; Other (specify) _____

16. If you have children, how do you feel about their future as

Muslims in this society? (specify) _____

17. Do you teach your children the basic tenets of Islam?

Yes No

If no, why not?

They go to an Islamic school

Their mother/father teaches them

I do not have time

I do not have any knowledge of Islam

___ Other (specify) _____

18. As a Muslim, do you accept that your children date non-Muslims?

___ No ___ Yes

If no, why?

___ It is against our Islamic values and faith

___ It is traditionally unacceptable in our culture

___ I fear they will catch sexually transmitted diseases

___ I would like them to marry a Muslim and to have Muslim children

___ It is okay for boys, but not for girls

___ Other (specify) _____

19. Up to now, would you say you have got what you hoped for out of life in Canada?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Alhamdu Lillah (satisfied)

20. Would you like to go back home one day permanently?

___ Yes ___ No

21. What are your hopes as a Canadian Muslim? Please give 3 answers.

___ To serve Allah (SW)

___ To build an Islamic society in North America

___ To unify all Muslims in this country

___ To raise my children in the Islamic way

___ To find a Muslim to marry (husband/wife)

___ To finish my degree

___ To make more money

___ Other (specify) _____

22. If you were not born in Canada where do you prefer to practice

Islam? ___ Canada ___ An Islamic country (specify) _____

Please give three most important reasons to support your answer.

Point(1) _____

Point(2) _____

Point(3) _____

23. From your experience, how serious do you consider the following possible problems to be for Canadian Muslims?

	<u>Serious problem</u> <u>No problem</u>				
___ Being accepted by Canadians -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Drinking alcohol (drink/not) -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Eating Pork (eat/not) -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Marrying non-Muslims (agree/not) -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Interest on bank deposits(receive/not)	1	2	3	4	5
___ Having sex before marriage -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Celebrating Christmas (celebrate/not)	1	2	3	4	5
___ Children do not obey their parents ---	1	2	3	4	5
___ Women working outside the house -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Losing identity and faith -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Canadian media -----	1	2	3	4	5
___ Racism, discrimination, etc... -----	1	2	3	4	5

24. Have you experienced any psychological or social problems in this country because of your faith? ___Yes ___No

If yes, specify: ___Discrimination and racism

___Hostility (because I am Muslim)

___Loneliness and isolation

___Depression and stress

___Language problems

___Other (specify) _____

25. Would you say that you have lost some of your authority and dignity

because of Canadian social values?

 Yes No

26. As a Muslim in Canada, how do you evaluate the following?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Comments</u>
A- Canadian civil law. <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
B- Canadian education. <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
C- Social values <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
D- Freedom <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
E- Sexual equality ... <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
F- Religion in general <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G- Muslim community .. <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
H- Family structure .. <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
I- Immigration law ... <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
J- Non-Muslim- <u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
relationships					

Please Fill in Items Below Immediately

1. Total length of interview: minutes
2. Date of interview: / /1988
3. Place of interview:
4. Sex of respondent: male female
5. Nationality of respondent:
6. Were there any other people present during the interview?
yes no

Researcher Signature

APPENDIX: C

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE OTTAWA MUSLIM ASSOCIATION

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



The Ottawa Muslim Association,
257 Northwestern Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE OTTAWA MUSLIM ASSOCIATION

(ONTARIO CORPORATION NO. 152124)

Incorporated on 14 July 1966 and recorded on 25 July 1966
as Number 152124 in Liber 554 of the

Provincial Secretary's Office, Toronto, Ontario.

Charter amended on March 27, 1985

Constitution amended on September 25, 1977

January 19, 1985 and April 24, 1988

Registered as a charitable organization with the Department
of National Revenue for income tax exemption purposes.

Tax Exemption Registration No:- 0038703-39-

Revised April 24, 1988

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Article I - NAME

This organization shall be known as THE OTTAWA MUSLIM ASSOCIATION, hereinafter referred to as "The Association". The head office of the Association shall be in Ottawa.

Article II - BASIC OUTLINE AND OBJECTS

- (a) The Association shall be a religious and charitable organization governed by the Guidance provided in the Holy Quran and Sunna and concerned with the religious and general well-being of its Muslim members.
- (b) The Association shall be non-political and completely free from local, national and world politics.
- (c) The Association shall operate as an autonomous self-governing organization within the laws and principles of Islam, the laws of Canada and its own by-laws.
- (d) The Association shall have the following objects, that is to say:
 - 1. To establish, maintain and conduct a mosque;
 - 2. To establish, maintain and conduct a society for the teaching and instruction of its members in the fundamental and moral principles of the religion of Islam;
 - 3. To print, publish, sell and distribute literature of every nature and kind and to establish and operate printing plants for such purposes;
 - 4. To conduct public or private meetings of a religious nature and to establish, maintain and conduct classes for Muslim education and to employ instructors therefore;
 - 5. To aid in the establishment of Muslim immigrants in Canada and to teach the said immigrants the laws and customs of Canada, and to establish contact with visiting Muslims and introduce them to the Muslim community;
 - 6. To receive, acquire and hold gifts, donations, devices and bequests and membership dues;
 - 7. To give charitable donations both in cash and in kind to deserving persons and to approved, bona fide, local, national and international charities; and
 - 8. To co-operate with other organizations, whether incorporated or not, which have objects similar in whole or in part to the objects of the Corporation.

Article III - ACTIVITIES

Pursuant to its objects, the Association:

- (a) shall strengthen fraternal bonds and brotherly relations among Muslims by acting as the focal point of the Muslim community in the National Capital

- region;
- (b) shall promote communication and understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims;
 - (c) shall undertake various cultural activities such as the establishment of a Muslim Cultural or Muslim Youth Centre;
 - (d) shall carry on religious, social, cultural, civic, charitable, literary, athletic, scientific, research and other Islamic activities;
 - (e) shall make arrangements for the acquisition and maintenance of cemetery or part thereof; and
 - (f) shall, in general, do any and all activities and exercise any and all powers which may now or hereafter be lawful for the Association to do or exercise for the purpose of accomplishing any of the objects of the Association.

Article IV- MEMBERSHIP

(a) *Types of Membership*

As defined below in sub-articles (b), (c) and (d), there shall be three types of membership in the Association:

- (i) Regular members
- (ii) Associate members
- (iii) Honorary members

(b) *Regular Members*

1. A regular member, entitled to vote, shall be a Muslim who is 18 years or over, a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant and a resident of the National Capital Region, and who has donated a sum of at least \$25 to the Ottawa Muslim Association since April 1st. Voting at the Annual General Meeting and annual elections shall be conducted according to Article 2.
2. For the purpose of voting at the Annual General Meeting and the annual elections, the membership shall be restricted to those who have donated a minimum sum of \$25 between April 1st of the previous year and March 31 of the current year.
3. The amount of minimum donation for membership, required under this Article, shall be subject to reduction or waiver by a resolution of the Board of Directors.

(c) *Associate Members*

Any person who applies for membership of the Association and subscribes to the charter and constitution of the Association shall be registered as an associate member of the Ottawa Muslim Association unless such membership is objected to by a majority of the Board of Directors.

(d) *Honorary Members*

Honorary members shall be those persons who are so declared by a majority vote of the Board of Directors for their outstanding services to the Association.

- (e) The Association reserves the right to suspend membership of any person who does not act in accordance with the privileges and responsibilities of member-

ship in the Association, by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors.

- (f) A suspended member shall have the right to seek a repeal of its decision from the Board and, if unsuccessful, to appeal the decision of the Board before the general body and shall have his membership reinstated if a majority of the attending members so votes.
- (g) The Board of Directors shall ensure that a current register of members of the Association is kept at all times.

Article V - RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

- (a) All Muslims and associate and honorary members and their spouses shall be entitled to attend the services, gatherings and various activities organized by the Association, and to participate in the discussions thereat.
- (b) Only regular members shall be entitled to vote at the general meetings and to hold any elected office in the Association in accordance with this Constitution and By-Laws.

Article VI - ANNUAL AND OTHER GENERAL MEETINGS

(a) *Annual General Meeting*

1. The Annual General Meeting shall be held on the first Sunday in April or soon thereafter but no later than the end of April, as determined by the Board of Directors, at which time the following items of business shall be dealt with:
 - (i) Approval of the audited financial statements of the previous calendar year.
 - (ii) Presentation and discussion of the Secretary's report, President's report, and any other reports.
 - (iii) Appointment of the Auditor for the ensuing year.
 - (iv) Announcement of transfer of funds over \$1,000 from the Committees, Entities and Ottawa Women's Auxiliary.
 - (v) Announcement of the date and venue of the forthcoming elections.
 - (vi) Any other business
2. At least one copy of the reports to be discussed under 1(i) and 1(ii) above shall be posted in the Mosque at least one week before the date of the meeting.

(b) *Other General Meetings:*

1. The president shall have the power to call at any time a general meeting of the members of the Association.
2. The Board of Directors shall have the power to call at any time a general meeting of the members of the Association if so voted by at least twelve

members of the Board.

3. On the written request to the President by at least 40 regular members of the Association for a general meeting, indicating the purpose of such a meeting, the President shall call a general meeting within eight weeks of receipt of such a request.

(c) Notice of General Meeting

The members shall be notified of any general meeting not less than fourteen days in advance of the date set for the meeting, except under emergency circumstances which are determined by the President. The members shall also be notified of the purposes for which a general meeting is called.

(d) Quorum

Thirty per cent of all the regular members who have voting rights on the date of the meeting shall constitute a quorum at any general meeting. If the required quorum is not reached at a meeting, the meeting shall be postponed for at least one week, the new date shall be posted at the Mosque and fifteen per cent of the regular members on that date shall constitute the quorum for that meeting. The latter procedure shall also apply if the quorum is lost during the course of a meeting, or if the meeting is terminated for any reason, before the conclusion of its business.

(e) Voting

Each regular member shall be entitled to one vote on a resolution. Except for matters relating to articles XI(g), XIII and XIV, every decision shall be made by a majority of votes cast. In the case of an equality of votes, the President shall have a second or recording vote. Voting on a resolution shall be either at a general meeting or through ballot. In the latter case, a decision shall be valid if the total number of votes cast equals the required number for a quorum.

Article VII - ELECTION PROCEDURES

- (a) An Election Committee consisting of not more than five members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors in February or earlier each year.
- (b) The Election Committee shall invite, receive and, after receipt, vet nominations for the members of the Board of Directors who are to be elected in accordance with Article VIII of this Constitution for the next year.
- (c) At least three members of the Election Committee shall be regular members of the Association and not more than two shall be members of the Board of Directors. However, no member of the Election Committee shall seek or accept nomination to any office involving membership on the forthcoming Board.
- (d) The notice of the annual general meeting shall also inform the general body of the composition of the Election Committee.
- (e) The Election Committee shall be provided, by the Board of Directors, with the current list of regular members.
- (f) The Election Committee shall ensure that the nominations, acceptances and the

actual elections are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

- (g) The Election Committee shall not receive any nominations after the first Sunday in April except when no nominations for an office have been received.
- (h) All nominations shall be in writing and shall be supported by at least two regular members and shall be endorsed by the candidate and the Election Committee as specified in the attached schedule.
- (i) Within three days after the closing date of nominations, the Election Committee shall post at the Mosque a list of the candidates.
- (j) The balloting shall be confidential and the members shall cast their votes during the time and at the place indicated.
- (k) Irrespective of the date of the elections, only those persons who were regular members between April 1st of the previous year and March 31st of the current year shall be eligible to vote at the elections.
- (l) The Election Committee shall arrange for advance polling for members expected to be out of the region on election day. Such voting shall be cast in the presence of at least three members of the Election Committee.
- (m) A candidate shall be declared elected if the number of votes cast in his favour is at least one more than the number cast in favour of any other candidate nominated for the same office. In case of a tie between two or more candidates, the Chairman of the Election Committee shall have a tie-breaking vote.
- (n) The results of the election, countersigned by all members of the Election Committee, shall be immediately posted at the Mosque.
- (o) The Election Committee shall hand over all documents relating to the election to the Secretary of the Association within four weeks after the elections.
- (p) The conduct of elections shall be independent of the business conducted at the General Meeting and the announced date of the elections shall not be changed.
- (q) The results of the elections announced as per Sub- Article (n) above shall be final. New elections shall be required only if:
 - 1. The Election Committee unanimously declares the election results null and void within twenty-four hours of the closure of the balloting; or if
 - 2. Nine or more members of the elected Board resign within one week of the election date.

Article VIII - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(a) *Composition:*

The Board of Directors of the Ottawa Muslim Association shall consist of the following members:

- 1. To be elected each year for a term of one year:
 - (i) President
 - (ii) Vice President
 - (iii) Secretary

- (iv) Joint Secretary
- (v) Treasurer
- (vi) Joint Treasurer
- (vii) Eight Directors

2. Ex-officio:

- (i) The immediate Past President
- (ii) The current President of the Ottawa Muslim Women's Auxiliary or the member designated by that Auxiliary.

(b) Representation

The Board of Directors shall reflect, through the elections, the cross-section of the Muslim community in the National Capital region.

(c) Qualifications for Members of the Board

1. For a member to be elected, his nomination papers shall be in accordance with Article VII(h) and he shall also satisfy the conditions set forth in the following paragraphs 2 to 4.
2. In addition, only those who have been regular members of the Association for the preceding three years are eligible for the office of President, two years for the Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and Joint Treasurer, and one year for the other Board members.
3. A member of the Board must be at least twenty-one years of age.
4. No officer shall be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms. There must be a lapse of at least one term before he can be re-elected to the same office.

(d) Responsibilities of the Officers

1. The President shall be responsible for maintaining efficient administration of the affairs of the Association, including supervision of other officers in the discharge of their duties. He shall perform all other duties usually related to the office of President. This includes the right to call the meetings of the Board and Committees as and when he shall consider necessary and to delegate duties to other officers as he sees fit, and the right to officially represent the Association or to select another member to do the same. He shall preside at the general meetings of the Association and at all meetings of the Board of Directors. The President shall have the power to spend up to a maximum of \$250.00 between two meetings of the Board of Directors. He shall, however, at the next Board of Directors' meeting, report the nature of expense and obtain the approval of the Board.
2. The Vice President shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President, or any duties that may be delegated to him by the President from time to time. He shall be acquainted with all the projects and activities of the Association and shall assist the President in his administration.
3. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the general meetings and all meetings

of the Board of Directors. He shall keep a permanent record of all activities of the Association, and all formal decisions. He shall conduct all correspondence, except where authority has been delegated to the chairman of an appointed committee, and shall report on correspondence to the meetings. He shall notify the members of the coming activities and general meetings. He shall call the meetings of the Board of Directors after the President's approval. He shall prepare annual statements as required by law under the Ontario Corporation Act and other Federal/Provincial Legislation and submit these reports to the proper authorities after clearing them with the President.

4. The Joint Secretary shall perform all the duties of the Secretary in the absence or disability of the Secretary or any other duties that may be delegated to him by the Secretary. He shall be responsible to maintain a Directory of Muslims in the National Capital Region.
5. The Treasurer shall receive and safely keep all monies received by the Association and pay out the same when this is approved by the Board of Directors. He shall keep record and present an annual report showing all collections made and disbursements. The Treasurer shall issue official receipts.
6. The Joint Treasurer shall perform all the duties of the Treasurer in the absence or disability of the Treasurer or any duties that may be delegated to him by the Treasurer.
7. In addition to the duties specifically listed in this sub-article, the Board of Directors, under the direction of the President, shall be responsible for, and shall distribute among the members of the Board, any and all other activities related to the objects of the Association.
8. The members of the Board of Directors shall attend all Board meetings.

(e) *Quorum*

The Board of Directors shall meet at least once every month. The President or Vice President and at least eight other members of the Board shall constitute a quorum.

(f) *Powers and Duties of the Board*

1. The management of the affairs of the Association, including the determination of progress, policies, operating expenses and charitable donations shall be vested in the Board of Directors.
2. The Board of Directors shall have the privilege to release by a two-thirds majority vote any of its directors from his position on the Board if he misses, without reason acceptable to the remaining members of the Board, all Board meetings for three consecutive months or if he is convicted of a criminal offence or if he indulges in activities which are contrary to the objectives of the Association or if he uses the Association to serve the political aspirations of any country or people.
3. If a vacancy on the Board occurs, the Board of Directors shall, if deemed

necessary, fill the vacancy from amongst the regular members of the Association keeping in mind the provisions of Articles VIII(a), (b) and (c).

4. The Board of Directors, immediately after assuming charge, shall take into account the objectives of the Association and announce, within four to six weeks, the various functions and duties entrusted to the members of the Board for the year.
5. For the purpose of objective 7 in Article II(d), advance approval of at least twelve members of the Board shall be required for each donation made in the name of the Association whether by the Board or by any of the auxiliary, subsidiary or appointed committees. The sum of such donations in any calendar year shall not exceed 10 per cent of the Association's total revenue, from local community sources, of the previous calendar year. Members of the Board of Directors, office bearers and directors in the affiliated entities, committee members and employees of the Association shall be ineligible to receive such donations.
6. The powers granted to the Board under Article VIII(f)5 shall be forfeited immediately in the event of the contingency stipulated in Article XIII.

(g) Signing of Cheques and Receipts

1. In order to pay for expenditures authorized by the Board of Directors, both the President and the Treasurer shall sign on all cheques on behalf of the Association.
2. The President or, in his absence, the Vice President, shall initial all statements of accounts maintained in the name of the Association with different banking institutions.
3. Each year, within a week after elections or when any of the above officers is replaced, the President shall notify the bank about the change in authority in clause 1 above.
4. The Board shall determine the persons authorized, in addition to the Treasurer, to issue official receipts on behalf of the Association. All entities, committees and auxiliaries who intend to issue receipts shall inform the Board of the names of persons designated to issue official receipts within a week after their elections or appointments.

Article IX - COMMITTEES

- (a) The Board of Directors shall delegate some of its responsibilities by appointing committees with specified duties for a term of one year. These duties shall include educational programmes, religious affairs, etc.
- (b) The Chairman of a committee shall be authorized to represent the Association and correspond with outside organizations and individuals so long as the subject matter is within the scope of his authorized duties.
- (c) The Board of Directors shall be authorized to dissolve any of the committees at any time as it sees fit.
- (d) A committee Chairman shall attend the meetings of the Board of Directors.

report on the activities of his committee as and when considered necessary by either party.

- (e) After the expiry of the term of a committee, the Chairman shall return all files, letters, records and any other item purchased for his committee, to the Secretary of the Association. He shall submit financial statements of the committee (if applicable) and return all monies collected on behalf of the committee to the President.

Article X - APPOINTMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE IMAM

- (a) The choice of an official Imam for the Ottawa Mosque and his appointment shall be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors subject to ratification by a majority of the regular members of the Association either in person at a general meeting or by ballot.
- (b) The Imam, who shall have a working knowledge of the English and Arabic languages, shall be on probation for one year and shall be appointed for a period not exceeding three years. At the end of this period, his contract shall be reconsidered by the Board of Directors for a renewal for a specific period not exceeding three years. The renewal shall also be subject to ratification as in (a) above.
- (c) The Imam shall abstain from political activities, sermons, or words designed to serve the interests of one individual, group or community or of a foreign country. He shall work for the Ottawa Muslim Association as a whole in the sphere of religion and shall carry out the duties as specified in the contract drawn up by the Board of Directors.
- (d) The Imam shall not participate in local, national or international politics, or issue statements on behalf of the Association of the Ottawa Muslim community.

Article XI - THE OTTAWA MOSQUE AND RELATED FUNDS

- (a) The Board of Directors shall make the necessary arrangements for the security, operation and maintenance of the Mosque.
- (b) Except for prayer congregations, all other gatherings in the Mosque and premises adjoining it shall be subject to the advance approval of the Board of Directors.
- (c) The Ottawa Mosque shall always remain a mosque and no person who professes to be a Muslim shall ever be denied his/her right of worship in the Mosque. While this right is unalienable, no person shall attempt to exercise this right in a manner which jeopardizes the security and sanctity of the Mosque.
- (d) All monies and funds received on behalf of the Association shall be deposited or invested in the name of the Ottawa Muslim Association.
- (e) The Board of Directors shall hold all endorsements and other funds heretofore or hereafter acquired for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the

Association. The Board shall make changes in the investments or securities as seem to them wise, provided, however, that investments shall be made in such investments as are approved for Canadian insurance companies.

- (f) All title deeds, stocks or other security certificates or valuable papers shall be registered in the name of the Ottawa Muslim Association.
- (g) All funds shall be spent towards the construction, furnishings and maintenance of the Ottawa Mosque and towards such related activities as the operation of a school provided that the plans are approved first by a seventy per cent majority of the Board of Directors. Furthermore, any capital expenditure or acquiring of new assets exceeding ten per cent of the total revenue of the previous year shall require prior approval of the General Body.

Article XII - SUBSIDIARY COMMITTEES AND AFFILIATED ENTITIES

- (a) All affiliated entities approved by the Board and committees appointed by the Board of Directors operating under the Charter of the Ottawa Muslim Association shall be subject to the provisions of this Constitution.
- (b) Funds and assets accumulated by these affiliated entities, committees, etc. shall remain the property of the Ottawa Muslim Association.
- (c) All funds in excess of \$1000.00 in the accounts of such affiliated entities and committees shall be transferred into the main account of the Ottawa Muslim Association at the end of the fiscal year.
- (d) A quarterly statement of receipts and expenditures shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors of the Ottawa Muslim Association within four weeks after the close of the quarter.
- (e) All books and records maintained by these entities and committees shall be turned over to the Treasurer of the Ottawa Muslim Association within one month after the fiscal year.

Article XIII - DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

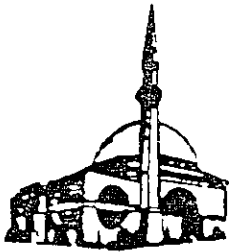
In the event of the dissolution of the present Ottawa Muslim Association, the Board of Directors in office at the time of such dissolution together with the members of the Board in office in the year immediately preceding the dissolution, shall, after making payment for all debts and liabilities, hold the funds and other assets of the Association in trust for a period of not less than two years. The members of the two Boards shall jointly strive to remove the causes which led to the dissolution of the Association. However, in case the Ottawa Muslim Association is not reorganized within these two years, members of the two Boards of Directors shall make legal arrangements to transfer all the assets of the Association to trustees for the upkeep and maintenance of the Mosque.

Article XIV - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

The Constitution shall be amended, except Articles XI(g), XIII and XIV, by a majority vote of the members attending a general meeting, called at least fourteen days in advance. The notice of amendments shall be sent by the Secretary to all regular members before the meeting. Such amendments shall also be passed by a majority of votes cast through ballot provided that the total number of votes cast shall not be less than thirty per cent of all regular members at the time. Articles XI(g), XIII and XIV shall be amended only if at least seventy per cent of all regular members cast their votes in favour of such amendments.

Article XV - SEAL

The seal, an impression whereof is stamped in the margin hereof, shall be the corporate seal of the Association. This seal shall be kept in safe custody with the President.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



(Schedule)

**The Ottawa Muslim Association,
257 Northeastern Avenue,
Ottawa, Ontario.**

NOMINATION

I, _____, a regular member of the Ottawa Muslim Association,
nominate _____ for the office of _____ for the year _____.

(name and signature)

(date)

ENDORSEMENT

We, the undersigned regular members of the Ottawa Muslim Association, second the
above nomination:

(name and signature)

(date)

(name and signature)

(date)

ACCEPTANCE

I, _____, a regular member of the Ottawa Muslim Association since
_____, accept the above nomination and, if elected, undertake to discharge my
duties as stipulated in the Constitution of the Ottawa Muslim Association.

(name and signature)

(date)

VERIFICATION

Found in order as per the provisions of the Constitution of the Ottawa Muslim
Association.

Chairman, Election Committee

(date)

Member, Election Committee

(date)